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Music and Letters

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No. 4

EDVARD GRIEG'S PIANOFORTE MUSIC

By KATHLEEN DALE

EDVARD GRIEG—Luigi Boccherini. How strangely the names of these composers consort with each other! Born a century apart in time, and in cities more than a thousand miles distant, what could the two musicians possibly have in common? Little, indeed, save that each was a fine performer upon his own instrument—the Norwegian on the piano and the Tuscan on the cello. Except for this, and the coincidence of their sharing the year 1943 for the commemoration of their centenary and bi-centenary respectively, the composers stand in marked contrast in two important matters: the accessibility of their works and their present-day reputations as composers.

On the one hand, Boccherini, who was a prolific composer, is known to the world in general chiefly by one minuet—itsself merely an orchestral arrangement of a movement from one of his string quintets—and to musicians in particular by a small number of works, principally for cello and for strings. By far the greater part of his output is unpublished and it may well be that the composer's tercentenary will fall due for commemoration before all that he wrote will appear in print. Yet, such is his reputation among musicians that those, comparatively few, who know his work may pride themselves on the recognition of a rare and gifted composer; distinguished artists who play his compositions may win praise for their perception in performing them.

On the other hand, Grieg, who wrote far less than did Boccherini, was fortunate enough to have all his compositions published during his lifetime, and many of them widely performed before his death. To this day they are readily available, and the pink covers of the Peters Edition Grieg are familiar all the world over. But in the musical life of this country Grieg's standing as a composer is not an enviable one. Many charges are levelled against his music; that it is too popular to be taken seriously; that it is too national in colour to be considered favourably outside his own country; that it abounds in mannerisms and that it lacks formal balance and design. The fact that he wrote no symphonies denies him the status usually accorded to composers of such works. His orchestral suites are reckoned as coming dangerously near the category of "light music"; his chamber music, though classical in intention, is romantic rather than classical in character, and is shunned by the fastidious. His songs can, and do, hold their own in any recital programme, but his solo piano works, with the possible exception of the 'Ballade', are not accounted as attaining to the standard required by

recitalists—though they are permissible for broadcasting and recording—and the pianist who might display the hardihood to include a group of short Grieg solos in a London programme would be frowned upon by critics and fellow-professionals alike. As for a Grieg encore, refreshing though it might be, it is unthinkable. Such is the current opinion of the composer that the many music-lovers who truly admire and enjoy his work have to admit the fact somewhat shamefacedly, and almost to apologize for their supposedly inferior taste.

Yet Grieg was a musician who deeply understood and dearly loved his instrument and took the greatest pleasure in writing for it. Of his seventy-four opus numbers he devoted more than twenty to works for piano solo; a few to piano duets, and one to a work for two pianos; in addition to which he arranged for piano solo several of his own works which had originally been composed in another medium. Moreover, he designed the piano parts of his chamber music with particularly loving care and the accompaniments to his songs with such exceptional felicity that they are a delight to all who have the good fortune to play them. That he was, above all, a pianist's composer is the theme of this essay, and in the following lines an attempt will be made to suggest the possible reasons for the present neglect of this branch of his art; to re-assess the musical value of his many piano works and, most of all, to restore them to the honoured place they once held in the thoughts and affections of pianists. In considering the works it will be convenient to divide them into three groups: those, the most numerous, of small scale, those, very few, of larger scale and those others which are pre-eminently national in character. But first some of the causes for their present state of exile will be briefly reviewed.

Few of Grieg's smaller piano pieces are really difficult to perform, and the great majority can be played by inexpert hands without undue effort. They were thus early requisitioned as teaching pieces and consequently became the prey of young and inexperienced players and of unskilled amateurs, who performed them so frequently and so inadequately that all their freshness and charm were dulled, and listeners naturally wearied of them. What bad pianists had ruined in private good pianists could hardly reinstate in public, and the ill-treated pieces lost their footing in recital programmes. They were not designed primarily for concert purposes; but then, neither were many of Schumann's small pieces. Yet these have become an integral part of every recitalist's repertory, and it is in measuring the excellence of these little works of Schumann's that one can detect the shortcomings of Grieg's.

Whereas Schumann would generally group a set of pieces around a central poetic idea and choose for each of them an appropriate key so as to create a coherent whole, Grieg, except in the 'Holberg Suite' and in the 'Scenes of Peasant Life', did neither. He seems to have pursued his ideas without any pre-conceived plan, and the ten books of Lyric Pieces, the sets of 'Album Leaves', 'Humoresques', 'Poetic Tone-Pictures' and 'Moods' give every sign of being written with little regard to unity of style or affinity of key. This lack of planning may possibly be considered as denoting the freshness and irresistibility of his inspiration, but it hinders the ready acceptance of these many sets of unrelated pieces. Few of the single items are strong enough to stand alone, and a large number are cast in a mould which is in itself unsatisfactory—episodical form drawn out of proportion by the exact repetition of both the middle and the recapitulatory sections. While this design is acceptable for short movements of classical type where emphasis falls on the formal balance, it is far less suitable for longer

movements of impressionist character in which continuity of outline is of greater importance.

But these various disabilities of planning and of form are of small account in comparison with the great beauty of Grieg's style, a beauty which is unique in its blending of a personal with a national idiom. His power of portraying a scene or a mood, a landscape or a state of mind, and of surrounding a simple musical statement with an aura of enchantment are exemplified again and again in his works. That he gave poetic titles to almost everyone of his piano solos indicates that he needed a definite image from which to develop his musical structure. Indeed, *all* Grieg's compositions, whether they bear titles or not, are of an evocative character. Even when he wrote in sonata form, for which activity he was temperamentally unsuited, picturesqueness was never very far away, and, in those longer works many a radiant little interlude recalls one of the miniature, distant sun-lit pastures seen through the open window of a sombre building such as the early masters were so fond of depicting. Grieg was himself a miniaturist, as the short piano pieces so convincingly reveal.

This long series begins at Op. 1 with a set of four movements, the only ones to appear without individual titles or a generic term. The composer starts off, shyly Schumannesque as befits the dutiful eighteen-year-old Leipzig student, with a movement in D major, strongly recalling the 'Novelette' of that key but with all the impetuosity left out. The only typical Grieg touch is to be found at the cadences, where the dominant is held in the upper voice while chromatic harmonies below slide down to the final tonic chord. The second piece, in C major, shows the young Grieg taking his first steps as the arch-chromaticist he was later to become. The wistful movement bristles with accidentals to such an extent that even a practised Grieg player may be excused a few slips in sight-reading this otherwise not difficult score. The wayward middle section is of interest, not only as showing the composer feeling his way in the key of E minor (which he was later to handle so often and with such understanding), but also by its capricious pianistic style, as foreshadowing the scintillating passage of transition between the first and second subjects of the opening movement of the Concerto. The third piece, in A minor, is the first of the salon type which flowed so readily from Grieg's pen: a graceful, well-mannered piece of indoor music presenting a striking contrast to its more rugged neighbour, the final movement in E minor. In the latter, the points of interest are the dark colouring, the varied metrical scheme which includes the lengthening of a phrase from four bars to six by means of a momentary, distant modulation—one of those chameleon-like changes which later so often adorned his pages—a sequential passage prefiguring the one in the Prelude of the 'Holberg Suite' and the appearance in the coda of the triplet figure with its poignant harmony which became the motif of his 'Lonely Wanderer' (Op. 43) some years later.

The next collection, 'Six Poetic Tone-Pictures' (Op. 3) opens and closes with movements in E minor—by now obviously a favourite key—both of which show a surer command of keyboard style. The second, in B \flat major, is a warmly pulsating cantabile which conjures up visions of the future 'Erotik' (Op. 43) and the Canon in B \flat (Op. 38); the third, in C minor, is robust and purposeful, while the fourth, in E major, is full of subtle syncopations and suspensions, and in spite of the repetition of the alternating sections is nevertheless a continuous and smooth-running whole. The remaining movement in F is the only one to which Grieg imparted a mildly northern flavour. It

opens with an artless melody of folksong type, and later the bare fifths of the accompaniment lend a pastoral touch to the proceedings. This is a forerunner of the kind of piece which in later years Grieg would dignify by a distinctive Norwegian title.

It was between the completion of Op. 3 and the composition of Op. 6 that Grieg made the acquaintance in Copenhagen of his fellow-countryman, the composer Richard Nordraak, who drew his attention to the wealth of Norwegian folk music awaiting exploration. This meeting was of the utmost importance to Grieg, for it changed his whole musical outlook, and from that time onwards he lost no opportunity of utilizing this treasury of native melody and rhythm. That he continued to produce works evincing the strength of the German domination to which he had early been subject cannot be denied, but the Norwegian influence grew gradually stronger until it tinged his style with its northern lights.

The immediate result of this fresh stimulus was the set of four 'Humoresques' (Op. 6) written in 1865 and dedicated to Nordraak. The rather inept title indicates that Grieg as yet lacked the courage of his new convictions, for he would not otherwise have hesitated to name them Norwegian Dances. Such, indeed, they are, three of them energetic, rhythmical and agreeably national; the first and fourth of the Spring-Dance type, the second somewhat akin to a Halling. It is the fourth which shows the greatest advance in pianoforte style and points to some of the more elaborate writing of the 'Ballade' (Op. 24). A chiaroscuro effect is produced by the alternate use of the high and low registers of the instrument; acciaccaturas increase the feeling of tension; a rocking bass with a bare fifth on the weak beats lends grace; a mounting crescendo above a dominant pedal heightens the excitement of the coda which, though in the major mode, ends surprisingly with a rapidly ascending melodic minor scale resolving on the major triad. In contrast to these three lively dances the remaining piece, in C major, *allegretto con grazia*, while equally blithe in spirit, is tender in expression, its lilting rhythm presaging the haunting refrain of Solveig's song. Its enchanting little coda is the first of that remote, dreamy type which Grieg would so often append to his quieter pieces.

These early pieces have been considered in some detail because they bear in them the seeds of many of the composer's later works. A pianist whose only acquaintance with Grieg has been made through the Concerto or the larger works might haply turn back to them to be refreshed by their youthful spontaneity and their morning-starriness.

The next of Grieg's smaller piano works, his Op. 12, is the first of the ten books of Lyric Pieces, which were written between 1867 and 1901 and comprise sixty-six pieces in all. The continuity of the series was occasionally interrupted by the composition of other short piano works. Three of these, Opp. 28, 37 and 40, will be touched upon here, out of chronological order, and a few others later on under their appropriate category, so that discussion of the Lyric Pieces may proceed unbroken.

Of the four 'Album Leaves' (Op. 28) the first, a conventional salon piece, had been composed before the opening set of the Lyric Pieces: the others followed at intervals between 1874 and 1878. The second might have been composed upon hearing the first act of 'Tristan and Isolde', so reminiscent is it of those anguished chromaticisms. It does, however, contain a tiny interlude of pure Grieg: a sequence of decorative arpeggios on the chord of the ninth. The next piece is the first to be written in a style Grieg particularly favoured later on: the alternation

of the polished with the pastoral, of the atmosphere of the *salon* with that of the *saler*. It opens and closes as a graceful waltz in A major, but the middle section flies away into A minor for a spring-dance in the mountains. The last movement, though written in the same alternating sections, is different in character, being definitely Norwegian in colour all the way through and varied only by the opposing nostalgic and carefree moods of its sections. It is very much of the same type as the later and better-known Lyric Pieces, 'Home-Sickness' (Op. 57) and 'Once upon a Time' (Op. 71).

The two 'Valse-Caprices' for pianoforte duet (Op. 37), which were also arranged for piano solo by the composer, are warmly expressive pieces, full of unusual harmonic progressions. The trio of the second is composed of unbelievably slender material: an eight-bar phrase of two figures—one a block of four reiterated chords and the other the continuous alternation of a melody note with the semitone below. The phrase is repeated nine times in succession, each time with only a slight, though delectable, change of the harmony or of the pitch of the melodic line. Far from being monotonous, the effect is magical, and the feeling of suspense throughout as to where the next modulation will lead is not relaxed until the end of the ninth repetition, when the trio merges without break or hesitation into the recapitulation, as though there had never been the slightest doubt of its ultimate destination.

The 'Holberg Suite' (Op. 40) should also be mentioned here, for although it is infinitely better known in its orchestral version, it was originally written as a piano solo. It is an avowed pastiche, but, since it was composed to commemorate an eighteenth-century personage, it could hardly have been more fitly devised to evoke the desired atmosphere of that period. In contemplating it one can only feel admiration for the composer who could thus set aside his own individuality, could write so ably and compellingly in a style poles apart from his own, and leave so few of his charming finger-prints upon the work produced.

To deal adequately with the whole collection of Lyric Pieces would require far more space than is available in these times. The volume of 211 pages is a treasure-house of diverse and interesting exhibits and so representative of Grieg's art as a whole that it would be a fascinating task to examine each piece individually. This, however, being impossible here, it would seem that a solution of the problem might be found in classifying the contents into a few distinct groups and, by drawing particular attention to some of the pieces which typify the groups to which they belong, giving an idea of the nature of the whole series.

Up till this time, 1867, Grieg had not used descriptive titles for any of his single pieces, but from now onwards everything he wrote received a distinctive name; moreover, the names chosen generally correspond so aptly to the musical content that they are in themselves something of a guide to the classification of the various kinds of movement to be found in the volume, which may be roughly divided as follows: a large number of pieces of impressionist character, a smaller number expressive of moods and others of more abstract quality; to which may be added a few dances, both outdoor and indoor, a few sketches with a folk-tune outline and a sprinkling of salon pieces. It need hardly be said that this classification does not claim to be more than tentative. Many of the pieces might be regarded as belonging to two or even more categories.

The impressionistic and the subjective pieces, which the composer had not yet attempted and which together number more than half the total, will receive the most attention, since they represent the essential

Grieg and display almost every facet of his personal style. These impressions start simply enough in Op. 12 with 'the Watchman's Song', written after a performance of 'Macbeth' and conjuring up the eerie spirits of the night by the very effective means of low, pianissimo arpeggios and subdued horn-calls. They proceed to greater sureness of delineation by way of the quivering 'Butterfly'—a *moto perpetuo* of fluttering semi-quavers—the tragic 'Lonely Wanderer', the tremulous 'Little Bird' and the expectantly throbbing 'Early Spring', to reach a pinnacle of expressiveness in Op. 54 with the plaintive 'Shepherd Boy' and the ghostly, dream-like 'Bell-Ringing'. The last-named is possibly the most truly impressionist of any of Grieg's works and probably his most original piano solo. With the exception of a few common chords in the closing bars and a couple of sixths and fourths at the first cadence, it is constructed entirely of fifths: bare fifths in the left hand on the strong beats, alternating with fifths often decorated by acciatura thirds in the right hand on the weak beats. With the pedal to add sonority, the whole effect is one of confused vibration soaring in the air, just as in Debussy's 'Cathédrale engloutie' a similar sound produced by different means seems to be floating in the sea. The likeness between the two pieces is further enhanced by the coincidence of their both being written in the key of C major.

The impressionist pieces continue, still on a high level, with the portrait of Gade (Op. 57), one of the composer's mentors in his earlier years. This piece is the very antithesis of the one just described, being a model of conventionality and hardly impressionist at all. The reason for including it in this group is that it gives such a very clear impression of the Danish composer it portrays, showing him to have been gently impulsive, earnest and warm-hearted. Sequences of canonic imitations supported by a throbbing accompaniment abound and give the piece a suitably academic tinge without detracting from its warm spontaneity. To a slightly later period belongs the impetuous purling 'Brooklet' (Op. 62), in which the type of piano writing points forward to the accompaniment of the song 'At the Brook' (Op. 67) which was to be composed a few years later. In the next piece, 'Phantom', the quality of evanescence is conveyed by a series of modulations which cause the principal phrase to drift, unchanged, into keys successively a semitone below that of its first statement: a bold procedure, but one which is justified by the exigencies of the fantastic situation. Still later comes 'Evening in the Mountains' (Op. 68), and by now Grieg's skill in tone-painting is highly developed. This E minor piece in 2—4 time, though of delicate character, is boldly conceived. Between a lightly sketched introduction of seven bars and a coda of six, two different versions of the same material are presented: the first an intensely expressive single-line melody for the right hand, thirty-eight bars in length coming to an expectant pause on the dominant; the second an exact repetition of this melody, now richly harmonized until it dies away above a tonic pedal preceding the coda. The remarkable feature of this piece is that each of the strongly contrasting sections sounds so perfectly natural that it is impossible to decide which of the two is the more successful—the unharmonized or the harmonized. The movement should have a particular interest for musicians in this country, for it anticipates that part of the opening section of Vaughan Williams's 'The Lark Ascending' where the violin, unaccompanied, dwells upon a little figure made from the very same notes, written in the very same key, and reiterated in the very same way as in the Grieg piece.

The last of the impressions to be mentioned here is 'Summer Evening' (Op. 71). This tranquil two-page sketch is the only one of all

Grieg's piano solos to be written in D \flat major, and strangely enough it bears a stronger affinity in style than any other of his solo pieces to the slow movement of the Concerto, which is also written in this key, both works being instinct with the lucent serenity and expansiveness which characterize the Norwegian summer-evening scene. The means used to create the quietly glowing atmosphere are not at all exceptional: a few chords of the ninth, eleventh and thirteenth resolving unexpectedly; a few modulating sequences proceeding by step of a semitone upwards and a few descending semiquaver passages of broken fourths above spread chords of the seventh are the only special harmonic devices employed. But the choice of register and the spacing of the chords on the keyboard cause a magical lightness and clarity to pervade the whole piece, and the little coruscating semiquaver passages intensify rather than disturb the tranquillity, in the same way as do the decorative scale passages in the *Adagio* of the Concerto. It is almost as if the composer had turned back thirty years and had recaptured some of the spirit which inspired his greatest piano work.

Among the pieces expressing varied moods, the sombre outnumber the sunny. Of the two entitled 'Melancholy', the first (Op. 47) is essentially in Grieg's early, Schumannesque manner, while the second (Op. 65) exemplifies his later, more rugged personal style, and is the more interesting pianistically on account of excursions into the very lowest depths of the keyboard compass. In wistful mood, too, is 'Home-Sickness' (Op. 57), with its nostalgic first and last sections in E minor, separated by a vivacious little episode in E major affording a consolatory glimpse of the longed-for homeland. Among the happier pieces in this class are 'Gratitude' (more correctly 'Thanks', Op. 62) and 'At the Cradle' (Op. 68). In the first-named a long, well-sustained diatonic melody, followed by a little figure rising eagerly by chromatic sequence, expresses such an exuberance of feeling that it sounds as though the composer were almost overwhelmed by the depth of his gratitude. In the last few bars the little figure descends calmly over a tonic pedal to a solemn plagal cadence: a fitting conclusion to this pæan of thanksgiving. 'At the Cradle' is as serene as the preceding piece is impassioned and tinged with that whole-hearted freshness which was noted in the composer's early works, but with the difference that by now the chromaticisms have become an integral part of the construction instead of being an extraneous element.

Among the movements of more abstract type two bearing the non-committal title of 'Melody', belonging to Op. 38 and Op. 47 respectively, present several points of interest, especially in their strong mutual contrast. The first is a docile, rather uneventful little sketch in C major, in which a pungent discord—an augmented second clashing with the chromatic semitone immediately above it—makes an occasional surprising appearance in a prominent position, and in which all the phrases are of uneven length, either seven or nine bars, a rare occurrence in Grieg's usually square-cut work. The second, in A minor, written in 6—8 time and in unceasing trochaic metre the whole way through, is dark in colour and restless in character. Within an entirely regular rhythmical scheme it canters in determined fashion through a succession of keys, returning to the starting point to go through the whole procedure a second time before the tension is relaxed, the pace of the canter slackens and the movement is brought to a final, uneasy standstill in the lower reaches of the keyboard.

Of the remaining, less numerous categories of the Lyric Pieces one example of each must suffice to indicate their style. A typical outdoor

dance is the C major 'Halling' (Op. 71), a boisterous movement which starts off with a sudden tuning-up of instruments followed by an expectant silence, and then settles down to a succession of strongly accented tunes, the first of which is almost identical in outline with that of the 'Norwegian Bridal Procession' (Op. 19). The tunes are accompanied by lively, decorated pedal basses which keep the left hand skipping across wide intervals to come back again and again to the pedal-point, so that the effect is one of hard brilliance, and almost of virtuosity, too, for Grieg allows himself the only glissando of his career. The most characteristic of the indoor dances is the 'Valse-Improptu' (Op. 47), an E minor movement although it opens apparently in the key of A minor, as if the composer were still haunted by his recently completed 'Anitra's Dance'. The melody and the bass proceed by similar motion almost all through, and as their principal direction is nearly always downwards, the prevailing mood is a somewhat chastened one. Only one principal melodic theme is used, and in the contrasting episode in B minor it is entrusted for a time to the left hand, which treats it as an expressive solo beneath light right-hand chords before it comes running up the keyboard by arpeggio to resume its original dominant position in the uppermost part. The piece is particularly well written for the pianist, having many passages finely adjusted between the two hands.

Among the several pieces with a folk-tune outline, 'In Ballad Vein' in C minor (Op. 65) is a shining example of the skilful treatment of a rather undistinguished melody. Grieg eschewed his accustomed chromaticisms and placed the tune in a setting of great simplicity. The eight-bar phrase is repeated six times, each time with some slight variation of either pitch, key, dynamic marking, doubling of the melody or fullness of harmony, and at the end the listener is left with the feeling of having heard a pleasantly monotonous old ballad sung with deep conviction by an ancient bard.

As an example of the salon type the piece bearing that very title, 'Salon' (Op. 65), should be the most appropriate choice, Grieg's own designation being a guarantee of its status in this category. It is written in A major, but, like the earlier 'Butterfly', opens with a broken chord of the dominant ninth, after which it does not definitely establish its tonality until the fifteenth bar, when, having at last achieved a perfect cadence, it immediately makes a short expedition into A \flat , soon to return enharmonically to the tonic key. The lively metrical scheme, with its alternations of 6—8 and implied 3—4 time, adds lightness to this very graceful little piece.

Grieg's last set of piano pieces, Op. 73, composed in 1906, although entitled 'Moods', is really a continuation of the Lyric Pieces with their wide variety of style, and only the first, 'Resignation', can be truly considered as expressing a mood. This is the composer's swan-song in the key of E minor and is a short, concentrated movement of prelude type, built upon a single phrase which is developed to a telling climax and reduced to its simplest terms to form the coda. The next piece, 'Scherzo-Improptu' in B \flat major, is lively, capricious and as expansive as the previous piece is terse. In construction it is of much the same character as the 'Valse-Improptu' recently mentioned, but is much more sprightly and pianistically more interesting and effective with its crisp ornaments and exciting stretto passages. It is followed by 'Nocturnal Ride', in D minor, an eight-page movement which, though metrically interesting in some of its details, lacks conviction as a whole and sounds far less like a ride than does the cantering 'Melody' of Op. 47. The following piece, only a page in length, is a genuine folk

tune from the Valdres region of Norway, set with extreme simplicity and beautiful aptness above a gently rocking accompaniment based upon alternate tonic and dominant pedals which make way at the end for an extended plagal cadence. The fifth movement, a study in F minor bearing the sub-title, 'Hommage à Chopin', is a pastiche as successful in its romantic style as is any movement of the 'Holberg Suite' in the classical manner. Once again Grieg effaced himself and proved that he could master a style alien to his own, and this time the task must have been a particularly congenial one. In the 'Students' Serenade' which follows, Grieg is his Norwegian self again, weaving an artless web of melody in 6—8 time above a texture of chromatic harmonies with independently moving inner and lower threads. With the 'Mountaineer's Song' Grieg takes his farewell as an impressionist composer, leaving behind him a last idealized picture of his native scene. The short refrain of the mountaineer's song is stated in different keys and at different pitches, placed above long-held basses of fifths and chased by echoing canons until the volume of tone gradually amassed seems to reverberate around the mountain tops before it dies away into the stillness of vast spaces. It is a touching farewell and so satisfying as a pianist's last word that it is regrettable that its position should be challenged by the posthumous publication in 1908 of three piano solos, none of which can be compared with any of Op. 73, and which together add nothing to Grieg's reputation. The first, 'Wild Dance', undated, and the third, 'Tempest Clouds' (1891), which was left unfinished and had to be completed by its editor, Julius Röntgen, are both diffuse, incondite pieces of music; but the third, 'Procession of Gnomes' (1898), a concise little movement in a vein which Grieg was inclined to overwork, presents an interesting point to musicians who look for similarities in the music of Grieg and Debussy, and who would find on its last page a progression of descending common chords in root position adumbrating the opening of the 'Danse sacré', composed in 1904.

In the composition of larger works Grieg was less at ease than with miniatures, for his musical ideas were nearly always of diminutive size, and when he wished to create a work of any length, he had few resources other than that of inventing a succession of short, well-defined phrases and of repeating them whenever it was necessary to fill in time and space. Consequently his works in sonata form, delightful as they are in respect of their ever-fresh and poetic material, are fragmentary instead of coherent in plan, graphic rather than architectonic in style. This is especially true of his solitary and early piano Sonata, in E minor (Op. 7), his first essay in this form. The opening and closing movements, both in sonata form, give the impression that the composer is constantly harassed by formal conventions though determined to follow them; in the second movement he subjects the slight material to a strain rather greater than it can bear; and only in the minuet and trio does he seem to be on surer ground and to be able to move with perfect ease within necessarily narrower confines. This movement, with its rugged *minore* opening and conclusion, and its pastoral *maggiore*, is of the same type as many of the lyric and other pieces already mentioned. The whole Sonata is written in a convincingly pianistic style, but it gives few hints of the coming splendour of the Concerto. By the time Grieg came to write this later work, his Op. 16, he had already composed two violin Sonatas, and it may have been the additional experience thus gained and perhaps the assistance afforded him by the availability of orchestral colouring and contrast, which enabled him to produce a large-scale work of far more satisfying proportions than heretofore. He had, too, begun

to assimilate the essence of his native folksong, evidences of which may be seen in the thematic material and melodic outline of all three movements and which make the whole work as attractive on account of the fresh Norwegian colouring as it is by reason of the artistically controlled brilliance of the solo part.

In the next important piano composition, the 'Ballade' (Op. 24), Grieg discovered himself as a writer of variations, a form which must have appealed to him, since it provided an ideal medium for the practice of his lyrical gifts. In style and texture the individual variations are of much the same character as the best of his miniatures, but they have the greater advantage of being unified by a definite theme, so that as they proceed they gather a momentum denied to sets of unrelated pieces. In the interval between the completion of the Concerto and the composition of the 'Ballade', Grieg had learned to know Liszt, who showed great interest in his work and gave him much encouragement. It might therefore have been expected that the 'Ballade' would show the influence of the abbé's style, and it is surely a proof of Grieg's artistic integrity that he did not succumb to the blandishments of Lisztian virtuosity, but continued to develop his own individual manner. Virtuosity seldom entered into Grieg's scheme, and passages of that variety of meretricious dexterity which Sir Donald Tovey so aptly, if disrespectfully, described as "Liszt's glass-chandelier pianistics" are blessedly absent from his work. In the 'Ballade' Grieg displayed several aspects of pianistic style over and above those he had manifested in the Concerto, and the work is remarkable both for its brilliance and its depth. His only other large-scale keyboard composition was another set of variations, the 'Romance' (Op. 51), this time for two pianos, and, like its predecessor, based on a Norwegian folksong. That it is the less successful of the two is possibly due to the restricted melodic outline of the tune which, though charming in itself, is not strong enough to support the exhaustive treatment it is called upon to undergo.

The nationalist tendencies in Grieg's art have been noted in passing, but the piano works to which he devoted his strongest nationalist sympathies have yet to be surveyed. They are six in number, three of which are original works based upon folk tunes, either authentic or idealized, while the remaining three are sets of arrangements of genuine folk tunes.

Of the first-named the earliest is the 'Scenes of Peasant Life' (Op. 19), a set of three movements which are linked together by key-relationship and by mutual thematic cross-reference. The second movement is the well-known 'Norwegian Bridal Procession Passing By', a piece of exceptionally sensitive piano writing which takes a high place among Grieg's miniature tone-poems. The 'Improvisata upon Two Norwegian Folk Tunes' (Op. 29) are less satisfactory, for they lack the fresh impulsiveness which distinguishes the movements of Op. 19; but the animated trio of the second attracts attention by the deftness of the piano writing and by the little wisps of alluring chromaticisms floating across the scene, which suggest that the composer must have had the *Venusberg* music in mind at the time of sketching it. The well-known 'Norwegian Dances' for piano duet (Op. 35, also arranged for piano solo) are, however, delightfully full of conviction, since the attractive thematic material receives such sympathetic treatment that the pieces have a far more genuinely Norwegian flavour than have the rather half-hearted 'Improvisata', thus demonstrating how thoroughly the composer had by now absorbed the native idiom into his own.

The three sets of folk-tune arrangements are of exceptional interest to students of Grieg's art, inasmuch as they show, firstly, the nature of

the material to which he so often turned for inspiration and upon which he based orchestral, choral and chamber as well as keyboard works; secondly, the manner in which he treated it and enriched it from his own harmonic resources; and thirdly, the influence it exerted upon the formation of his personal style. To read these little pieces is like perusing the pages of a thesaurus of Griegian chords and phrases, or delving into a dictionary of familiar quotations from his works. It is difficult, indeed, to imagine these folk tunes without Grieg's settings, so appropriate do they appear; or, on looking back over his art as a whole, to think of his original compositions without the folk-tune background, so inseparably are they interwoven and so closely do some of the distinguishing features of Norwegian folk music correspond with some of his stylistic idiosyncrasies.

A few of the most characteristic of the folksong traits are as follows: a fall of a step of one degree followed by the fall of a third; a succession of thirds either ascending or descending; a hovering around one note of a melody; and the frequent repetition of a short phrase or figure. Even a slight acquaintance with Grieg's works will suffice for identifying these traits as they are embodied in the texture of a few of his best-known compositions. Thus the first-named is found in the opening bravura passage of the Concerto, in the song, 'A Swan', and in the *Allegretto* of the violin Sonata in F major—in which movement the second trait may also be seen, as it is in the C major 'Humoresque' for piano, too. The third occurs in the refrain of Solveig's song; the fourth, in any of the movements of the first 'Peer Gynt' Suite. These examples are but a fraction of the countless numbers to be found all through Grieg's works.

The first of the three sets of folk-tune arrangements is 'Northern Dances and Folksongs' (Op. 17), containing twenty-five tunes from Lindeman's 'Norsk Fjeld Melodier', of which only four settings are longer than one page and the remainder are miniatures varying from three lines to a page in length. One of Grieg's methods of handling the material was to prefix a brief introduction to the tune so as to establish the style of the accompaniment and then to present it several times in succession, each time with a variation in harmony or figuration. Generally he added a few bars as coda. This was how he usually treated the dances, but in the songs he did not often repeat the tune more than twice; sometimes he would state it only once. Of Op. 17, the 'Spring-Dance', No. 1, shows his capacity for imparting diversity to several successive repetitions; No. 4, 'Niels Tallefjoren', the pensive charm with which he could invest a single statement of a melody; and No. 6, 'Bridal Song', his skill in adding a coda to correspond in style with his setting of a delightful twelve-bar tune.

The next volume, Op. 66, of 'Norwegian Folksongs', collected by Grieg himself, is much later in date and of rather different character, for it contains a higher proportion of longer pieces, in which the tunes are given a more picturesque setting. Among the nineteen items, three are short snatches of melody such as are sounded to call cattle back to the fold. One of these call-notes, No. 6, is used to form the prelude and postlude to a separate tune, but the other two are extended by the addition of ornaments and subjected to changes of time and of harmonization until each is transformed into a complete little piece of charming, far-away character. The type of harmony employed in Op. 66 is even more strongly chromatic in flavour than that in Op. 17, and some of the chords and progressions doubtless grate upon the ear of the folksong purist; but, considering the fundamentally sombre and monotonous character of Norwegian folksongs, it may perhaps be conceded that

chromatic treatment tends to banish their sadness and to enhance their haunting attractiveness.

Of all the pieces in the two collections the loveliest is 'Irr Ola Dale', No. 14 of Op. 66. The tune is that which Delius was later to use in 'On Hearing the first Cuckoo in Spring', and in this setting of Grieg's the composer's harmony is almost as Delian as that of Delius himself. The melody is treated strophically, and between each verse an interlude determines the style of accompaniment for the next. In the first verse the theme, which is in 6—8 time, is placed in the top voice, with simple harmonies incorporating the flattened seventh, above a pedal-bass of fifths alternately an octave apart and always on the weak beats of the bar. In the second the melody pursues its interior way between a descending bass and a gently pulsating treble to reach a climax succeeded by a few bars which, with their rich, changing harmonies below an almost stationary melody, recall the trio of the second 'Valse-Caprice' already described. In the last verse the theme returns to the upper voice to be warmly harmonized with many varieties of sevenths until it evanesces into a decorated plagal cadence and a pianissimo tremolo high up the keyboard.

The last of the works of national character, 'Slåtter' (Op. 72), is of quite another type, for this time Grieg made use of peasant material at second-hand by transforming into full-sized piano pieces some of the dance music for Hardanger fiddle which had been noted down and adopted for solo violin by Johan Halvorsen. Grieg undertook the work at the request of Knut Dale, a fiddler from Telemarken, who had written to him in 1901 requesting his assistance in the preservation of this unique heritage of folk music which was then in danger of disappearing. Grieg responded by arranging for Halvorsen to note down the tunes from Knut Dale's playing and to send them to him to transcribe for piano. His letters to Halvorsen at this time bear witness to his delight in the wild beauty of the dances with their wealth of ornamentation, to his desire to give them suitable permanent form and to his difficulties in handling material which was so sensitive that it was, as he said, all too easy to destroy its fragrance. The dance tunes themselves are as subtle, vigorous and abandoned as it might be expected the hardy and intelligent peasantry of the Hardanger region would evolve for performance on their native fiddle, an instrument which differs from the violin in being furnished with a set of sympathetically vibrating strings. The already elaborate metrical scheme of the tunes is further complicated by the concurrent use of 6—8 and 3—4 time, and the frequent occurrence of the sharpened fourth of the scale causes additional difficulties in harmonization. From a pianist's point of view the material appears utterly intractable, and the masterly way in which Grieg surmounted the many obstacles in adapting it for his own instrument can only be truly appreciated by closely comparing the piano pieces with Halvorsen's notation for the violin.

Grieg reproduced every possible feature of the uncouth wildness of the dances and of the rustic quality of the native instrument by the addition of heavy accompanying bass parts, by the frequent use of the cruder intervals, by wide spacing between the upper and lower parts, by crashing diatonic discords, incisive accents and ornaments, and by terse codas which clinch the argument. To two of the dances, all of which are in the major mode, he added contrasting interludes in the tonic minor, treating the original thematic material of each dance by augmentation. Elsewhere he kept strictly to the originals.

But brilliant as is this attempt to transmit the untamed spirit of the

Hardanger fiddle to the keyboard, the musical result is more fascinating to the musician than satisfying to the performer. Only a small proportion of the pieces are of sufficiently civilized character for concert performance in any but exceptional circumstances; the value of the others lies chiefly in their interest both as translations from one instrumental medium to another, and as relics of a folk art which has now fallen into desuetude.

As a composer for the piano Grieg added very little to keyboard technique. Except for his skilful use of ornaments as an integral part of the texture (a tendency derived from his preoccupation with folk music) and for the beautiful colour effects which he secured by the discerning use of the sustaining pedal, his writing has few distinguishing marks and his compositions owe their strongly individual style far more to his highly characteristic harmonic sense than to any original pianistic method of treating the material. Upon his harmonic equipment and its inter-relationship with the Norwegian folk idiom it is not necessary to enlarge here, for the subject has been explored and expounded with such breath-taking thoroughness by Dr. Kurt von Fischer in his book, 'Griegs Harmonik und die nordländische Folklore', that little remains to be discussed. Grieg's own words in this connection are, however, enlightening. "The realm of harmony", he said, "was always my dream-world, and my harmonic sense was a mystery even to myself. I have found that the sombre depth of our folk music has its foundation in its unsuspected harmonic possibilities. In my treatment of the folk-songs of Op. 66, and others, too, I have tried to give expression to my perception of their latent harmonies."

Grieg lived in close touch with the natural scenery of his country as well as with the inhabitants of the remote, mountainous districts of Norway to which he used to retire for long periods between his concert tours so that he might compose in surroundings congenial to his art. In addition to being so exceptionally well versed in his country's folk music, he was deeply aware of the climatic and scenic conditions which had moulded it, and he was thus supremely well fitted to give expression to the spirit of his native land by translating its distinctive sounds into a kind of music which may best be described as audible landscape. The pianist's indebtedness to Grieg may not be extensive, but it is considerable, and one day perhaps it will be acknowledged as widely as it deserves.

EDVARD GRIEG

Original Works for Piano Solo.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Opus.</i>	<i>Title</i>	
1862	1	Fire Klaver Stykker	Four Piano Pieces
1863	3	Poetiske Tonebilleder	Poetic Tone Pictures
1865	6	Humoresker	
1865	7	Sonata in E minor	
1867	12	Lyriske Stykker, I	Lyric Pieces, I
		1. Arietta	1. Arietta
		2. Vals	2. Valse
		3. Vægtersang	3. Watchman's Song
		4. Alfedans	4. Fairy Dance
		5. Folkeviser	5. Folksong
		6. Norsk	6. Norwegian Melody
		7. Albumblad	7. Album Leaf
		8. Fædrelandssang	8. National Song
1868	16	Concerto in A minor	
1870	17	Norske danser og viser	Norwegian Dances and Songs
1872	19	Folkelivs-billeder:	Scenes from Peasant Life:
		1. Fjeldslåt	1. On the Mountains
		2. Brudefølget drar forbi	2. Norwegian Bridal Procession Passing By
		3. Fra Karnevalet	3. Carnival Scene

<i>Date</i>	<i>Opus</i>	<i>Title</i>	
1875	24	Ballade i form av variasjoner over en norsk folkevise	Ballad in the Form of Variations on a Norwegian Folksong
1878	28	Albumblade (No. 1, 1864, No. 2, 1874) (No. 3, 1876, No. 4, 1878)	Album-leaves
1878	29	Improvisata over norske folkeviser	Improvisata on Norwegian Folk-songs
1883	38	Lyriske Stykker, II 1. Vuggeviser 2. Folkevise 3. Melodie 4. Halling 5. Springdans 6. Elegie 7. Vals 8. Kanon	Lyric Pieces, II 1. Berceuse 2. Folksong 3. Melody 4. Norwegian dance 5. Norwegian dance 6. Elegy 7. Waltz 8. Canon
1884	40	Holberg Suite	
1884	43	Lyriske Stykker, III 1. Sommerfugl 2. Ensom Vandrer 3. I Hjemmet 4. Liden Fugl 5. Erotik 6. Til Foråret	Lyric Pieces, III 1. Butterfly 2. Lonely Wanderer 3. In my Native Country 4. Little Bird 5. Erotikon 6. To the Spring
1888	47	Lyriske Stykker, IV 1. Valse-Impromptu 2. Albumblad 3. Melodie 4. Halling 5. Melankoli 6. Springdans 7. Elegie	Lyric Pieces, IV 2. Album Leaf 3. Melody 4. Norwegian Dance 5. Melancholy 6. Norwegian Dance 7. Elegy
1891	54	Lyriske Stykker, V 1. Gjøtergut 2. Gangar 3. Trolldtog 4. Notturmo 5. Scherzo 6. Klokkeklang	Lyric Pieces, V 1. Shepherd Boy 2. Norwegian March 3. March of the Dwarfs
1893	57	Lyriske Stykker, VI 1. Svundne Dage 2. Gade 3. Illusion 4. Hemmelighed 5. Hun danser 6. Hjemve	6. Bell-Ringing Lyric Pieces, VI 1. Vanished Days
1895	62	Lyriske Stykker, VII 1. Sylphe 2. Tak 3. Fransk Serenade 4. Bækken 5. Drømmesyn 6. Hjemad	4. Secret 5. She dances 6. Home-Sickness Lyric Pieces, VII 1. Sylph 2. Gratitude 3. French Serenade 4. Brooklet 5. Phantom 6. Homeward
1896	65	Lyriske Stykker, VIII 1. Fra Ungdomsdagene 2. Bondens Sang 3. Tungsind 4. Salon 5. I Balladetone 6. Bryllupsdag på Trolldhaugen	Lyric Pieces, VIII 1. From Early Years 2. Peasant's Song 3. Melancholy 5. In Ballad Vein 6. Wedding-Day at Trolldhaugen
1896	66	Norske Folkeviser	Norwegian Folk-Songs
1898	68	Lyriske Stykker, IX 1. Matrosernes Opsang 2. Bedstemors Menuet 3. For dine Fødder 4. Aften på Høifjeldet 5. Bådnåt 6. Valse mélancholique	Lyric Pieces, IX 1. Sailors' Song 2. Grandmother's Minuet 3. At your Feet 4. Evening in the Mountains 5. At the Cradle

EDVARD GRIEG'S PIANOFORTE MUSIC

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<i>Date</i>	<i>Opus.</i>	<i>Title</i>	
1901	71	Lyriske Stykker, X	Lyric Pieces, X
		1. Der var engang	1. Once upon a Time
		2. Sommeraften	2. Summer Evening
		3. Småtroid	3. Puck
		4. Skovstilhed	4. Peace of the Woods.
		5. Halling	5. Norwegian Dance
		6. Forbi	6. Gone
		7. Efterklang	7. Remembrances
1902	72	Slåtter	Norwegian Peasant Dances
1906	73	Stemninger	Moods
		1. Resignation	
		2. Scherzo-Impromptu	
		3. Folketone	3. Folk Tune
		4. Studie	4. Study
		5. Studenternes Serenade	5. Students' Serenade
		6. Lualåt	6. Mountaineer's Song
		Sex norske Fjeldmelodier	Six Norwegian Folk Tunes (published in one of the National Collections)
1908 (published)		Tre Klaverstykker :	Three Piano Pieces :
		1. Dansen går	1. Wild Dance
		2. Tusseslåt (1898)	2. Procession of Gnomes
		3. Hvide Skyer (1891)	3. Tempest Clouds
<i>Original Works for Pianoforte Duet</i>			
1881	35	Firhændige Danse	Norwegian Dances for piano duet
1883	37	Valse-Caprices	Two Valse-Caprices
<i>Original Work for Two Pianos</i>			
1891	51	Gammel norsk Melodi med variasjoner	Old Norwegian Melody with Variations
<i>Works transcribed for Piano Solo by the Composer</i>			
Op. 34	Elegiac Melodies		
Op. 35	Norwegian Dances		
Op. 37	Valse-Caprices		
Op. 41	Songs		
	Vuggesang	Cradle Song	
	Liden Håkon	Little Haakon	
	Jeg elsker dig	I love thee	
	Hun er så hvid	She is so white	
	Prinsessen	The Princess	
	Jeg giver mit digt til våren	I give my song to the Spring	
Op. 46	Peer Gynt Suite I		
Op. 50	Prayer and Temple Dance from Olav Tryggvason		
Op. 52	Songs :		
	Modersorg	A Mother's grief	
	Det første Møde	The first Meeting	
	Du fatter ej Bølgernes evige Gang	You know not the waves' eternal motion	
	Solveigs Sang	Solveig's Song	
	Kjærlighed	Love	
	Gamle Mor	Old Mother	
Op. 55	Peer Gynt Suite II		
Op. 56	Sigurd Jorsalfar		
Op. 63	Two Norwegian Melodies		
	Sörgemarsj over Rikard Nordråk	Funeral March for Richard Nordraak (1866)	
<i>Works transcribed for Piano Duet by the Composer</i>			
Op. 11	Overture : In Autumn		
Op. 14	Two Symphonic Pieces. (Movements from an uncompleted symphony)		
Op. 19, No. 2	Norwegian Bridal Procession		
Op. 34	Elegiac Melodies		
Op. 56	Sigurd Jorsalfar		
Op. 63	Two Norwegian Melodies		
Op. 64	Symphonic Dances		

A. E. HOUSMAN AND MUSIC

BY WILLIAM WHITE

It has often been remarked that it is not uncommon for a poet to be tone-deaf; but when I read in a recent biography of A. E. Housman that the author of 'A Shropshire Lad' knew nothing about music and "confessed it meant nothing to him",¹ it was with some surprise. The simplicity and melody of Housman's lyrics are their most outstanding features, and these are difficult to match in modern verse. And this lyrical quality has prompted composers to set about fifty of Housman's poems to music in considerably more than a hundred songs. How could it be possible for a lyric poet to know nothing about music? What evidence do we have that Housman cared little for music? What does he say concerning music in his criticism, particularly in 'The Name and Nature of Poetry'? Also one might discuss his poetry from two aspects: the use of musical terminology in his poems and the musical quality of his lyrics.

I

Offhand one would say, for example, that Walt Whitman's poetry shows a lack of musical knowledge on the part of the author; but we have sufficient evidence to disprove this, not only by a careful study of the prosody itself² and Whitman's vocabulary of musical terms, but from the knowledge that he was very much interested in music and even wrote reviews of concerts and music criticism. Two other American poets, prosodically similar to A. E. Housman—Edgar Allan Poe and Sidney Lanier—both knew music very well, especially the latter, who was a professional flautist, and displayed their knowledge in poetry and criticism. Yet let us look at a peculiar story told by Percy Withers of Housman's evident lack of feeling for music (or, rather, a feeling one would hardly expect):

Since he had so often and so unaccountably allowed his verses to be set to music,³ and never as I knew experienced the results, it occurred to me that he might like to hear gramophone records of Vaughan Williams's setting sung by Gervase Elwes. I was oblivious of the effect until two of them had been played, and then turning in my chair I beheld a face wrought and flushed with torment, a figure tense and bolt upright as though in an extremity of controlling pain or anger, or both. To invite comment or question was too like bearding the lion in its den, so I ignored the subject and asked mildly if there was anything else he would like. A pause. There was a visible struggle for self-possession, a slow relaxation of posture, and then a naive admission that people talked a good deal about Beethoven's fifth Symphony: had we got a record? I turned it on, and watched. The sphinx-like countenance suggested anything and everything but pleasure, though there was an expression of contentment during the slow movement, and faintest praise of it, and it alone, at the close.⁴

¹ Percy Withers, 'A Buried Life: Personal Recollections of A. E. Housman'. (London, Jonathan Cape, 1940), p. 82.

² For a good discussion of this matter see Gay Wilson Allen, 'American Prosody' (New York, American Book Company, 1936), pp. 217-243.

³ Housman was just the opposite in the matter of allowing his 'Shropshire Lad' lyrics to be included in anthologies: none appeared in England during his lifetime, and he continually refused permission to have them reprinted in collections. In the United States, however, he failed to secure a copyright, and could not prevent reprintings in anthologies.

⁴ Percy Withers, 'A. E. Housman: Personal Recollections', 'The New Statesman and Nation' (London), n.s. XI (May 9th 1936), p. 701. Mr. Withers tells the same story, with a few more interesting details, in 'A Buried Life' (pp. 82-83): "I thought one evening in the library to quiet a reaction so tumultuous, following the gramophone records of Vaughan Williams's setting of four of his lyrics, that my wife, who sat near him, was momentarily expecting him to spring from his chair and rush headlong out of the room; and the torment was still on his suffused and angry visage when the records were finished, and I first realized the havoc my mistaken choice had caused. I thought to soothe him by playing some record of his own choosing. He looked rather lost when I asked him to name one, but presently suggested the fifth

While this story seems conclusively to illustrate a total lack of interest in great music on Housman's part, it may be well to look into what part music may have played in his life from his boyhood in Fockbury House to his days in Oxford at St. John's as an undergraduate, to his life as Professor of Latin at University College and at Cambridge until his death in 1936. His sister, Mrs. Katharine E. Symons, and his brother, Laurence Housman, have written of those early years: their home life was apparently very delightful in the pleasant English countryside. She writes:

Our father was a man of many hobbies—too many—shooting, fishing, music, photography, firework-making, besides his chief interest, horticulture. All of us but Alfred took some part, eventually, in these occupations, but he was quite content to fill his spare time with reading and walking.⁶

This is certainly the type of boy one would expect the future classical scholar-poet to have been. But it was not always thus, for Mrs. Symons tells of the seven children's meeting in the drawing-room with their step-mother, "when Alfred would join us in cards, games, and glee-singing"⁶ She does not mention whether A. E. H. was a good singer; but when they all joined together to write a play in blank verse on the execution of Lady Jane Grey, each writing one of the scenes, one of the sister's scenes "was the night before the execution, and she asked Alfred to write a song that she could make Lady Jane sing to her lute for the last time".⁷ This song from 'The Tragedy of Lady Jane Grey' is reprinted in Laurence Housman's autobiography, 'The Unexpected Years', and begins with the line, "Breathe, my lute, beneath my fingers".⁸ But these few instances in Mrs. Symons's reminiscences of music in Housman's life, or rather lack of it, and a few equally unimportant ones in Laurence Housman's two memoirs are almost all that one may discover.

Of the two friends who have written with most authority of Housman in London and Cambridge, one (Mr. Withers) has already been quoted and the other, A. S. F. Gow, says absolutely nothing about Housman and music.⁹ There is a good deal said of Housman's interest in architecture, particularly cathedrals, in these books and others; however, if he cared anything about music, he apparently kept it to himself. At Cambridge, I am told by one who attended while Housman was there, there was much chamber music, and Housman had merely to walk a few steps from his book-crowded, unlovely rooms in Whewell's Court to hear his own excellent Trinity College choir. Music was in the air, but evidently it did not touch Housman, buried in his Manilius, Juvenal and Lucan. Still, he must have known at least a little about music, for he wrote to Seymour Adelman, an American bibliophile and Housman

Symphony, for the curious reason that he remembered to have heard it well spoken of. At the end he made a non-committal and quite colourless comment on the slow movement; the others he ignored. It was not the result one could have wished, nor did it suggest the desirability of continuing the music; for at least it was enough that the turbulence was quieted. . . . It had arisen so unexpectedly, was so incomprehensible, and had gone to such excessive lengths. The astonishment was even greater than the disappointment. I had bought the Vaughan Williams records primarily in the hope of giving him pleasure, the intense pleasure, as I supposed, of hearing to what use a distinguished composer could put his verse.¹⁰

⁶ Katharine E. Symons, 'Boyhood', 'Alfred Edward Housman: Recollections' (New York, Henry Holt & Co., 1937), p. 12. (The pagination of the English edition [Bromsgrove School, 1936] differs slightly). Permission to quote from this volume has been very kindly granted by Mrs. Symons and by the Headmaster of Bromsgrove School.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁹ Laurence Housman, 'The Unexpected Years' (London, Jonathan Cape, 1937), p. 101; (American edition, The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Indianapolis, 1936), p. 89. The first four lines are reprinted in 'Alfred Edward Housman: Recollections', p. 20; and the whole poem in Laurence Housman, 'A. E. H.: Some Poems, Some Letters and a Personal Memoir by his Brother' (London, Jonathan Cape, 1937), p. 38. (The American title of the latter issued by Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1938, is 'My Brother, A. E. Housman: Personal Recollections Together with Thirty Hitherto Unpublished Poems'; the pagination is the same as in the English edition.)

¹⁰ A. S. F. Gow, 'A. E. Housman: A Sketch Together with a List of his Writings and Indexes to his Classical Papers' (Cambridge University Press; New York, The Macmillan Company, 1936).

collector: "Neither illustrators nor composers care twopence about words, and generally do not understand them".¹⁰ He has more to say on this subject in an unpublished letter to his publisher, Grant Richards: "The trouble with book-illustrators, as with composers who set poems to music, is not merely that they are completely wrapped up in their own art and their precious selves, and regard the author merely as a peg to hang things on, but that they seem to have less than ordinary human allowance of sense and feeling".¹¹ And R. W. Chambers, a former pupil of his, and later Professor of English Literature at University College, London, writes: "It came rather as a surprise to learn that he had written a hymn to be sung at this time [his funeral], and even chosen the music, a melody by Melchior Vulpius, harmonized by J. S. Bach".¹²

The conclusion to this would seem to be that Housman had little interest in music, rarely (if ever) attended concerts, even disliked listening to music, especially settings of 'A Shropshire Lad', and only once asked to hear Beethoven's fifth Symphony because "people talked a good deal about it".

II

Now, what of Housman's use of musical terminology in his poems? For such a small body of poetry as he produced the list of words which might conceivably be called a vocabulary of music is comparatively long. However, the terms are, in keeping with Housman's simplicity and his use of Anglo-Saxon words, highly conventional and anything but technical musical terms: "air", "bells", "bugle", "chimes", "clarion", "drum", "drummer", "fife", "flute", "jingle", "keys", "lute", "music", "note", "peal", "piano", "pipe", "piping", "play (-s) (-ed) (-ing)", "psalm", "sing (sang)", "song", "timbal", "trumpets", "tunes", "voice", "whistle". There are of course many others pertaining to the sense of hearing, and even some of those listed must stretch the meaning of the term "music". Obviously no simple Shropshire lad would use such expressions as "adagio", "andante cantabile", "fortissimo" or "intermezzo"; nor would he talk of such composers as Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, Tchaikovsky or Haydn. But let us see how Housman employs the terms that are found in his poems.

After a day of labour the lads (writes Housman) would be called to the neighbour's, and

There to the dances
I fetched my flute and played.

The young to wind the measures,
The old to heed the air;
And I to lift with playing

And flute the sun to sleep.

The lofty shade advances,
I fetch my flute and play:
Come, lads, and learn the dances
And praise the tune to-day.¹³

¹⁰ Quoted in the section on letters in Laurence Housman, 'A. E. H.: Some Poems, Some Letters and a Personal Memoir', p. 200. In this letter to Mr. Adelman and in the one below to Mr. Richards he may well have been thinking of the settings to his own poems.

¹¹ Printed only in a rare-book catalogue of The Scribner Book Store, New York (No. 126, 1941). The letter deals mainly with Housman's annoyance at Claud Lovat Fraser's illustrations to 'A Shropshire Lad', which the poet would not permit to be used with his poetry.

¹² R. W. Chambers, 'A London Memoir', 'Alfred Edward Housman: Recollections', p. 60. The hymn to be sung, 'For My Funeral', was first printed in the 'Order for Service', May 4th 1936; then in the London afternoon papers that day, and it was included in the posthumous 'More Poems' (London, Jonathan Cape; New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1936) as No. XLVII. See A. E. Housman, 'Collected Poems' (London, Jonathan Cape, 1939; New York, Henry Holt and Co., 1940), p. 210.

¹³ A. E. Housman, 'Last Poems', XLI, 'Collected Poems', pp. 150-151.

Contrasted with this picture of happiness (to end, nevertheless, at the grave) is this of 'New Year's Eve':

Thorough the twilight shrilly
The bells rang, ringing no tune.¹⁴

And these lines from 'The Day of Battle':

Far I hear the bugle blow
To call me where I would not go,
And the guns begin the song,
"Soldier, fly or stay for long."¹⁵

Of 'The Recruit', who is returning home, Housman writes:

And Ludlow chimes are playing
The conquering hero comes.¹⁶

Again, as in so many cases where Housman uses musical words, they refer to instruments used in the British army:

Far I hear the steady drummer
Drumming like a noise in dreams.¹⁷

In a similar vein:

They [lovers] hear from over hill
A music playing.

Behind the drum and fife,

The soldiers follow.

And down the distance they [the lovers]
With dying note and swelling,
Walk the resounding way
To the still dwelling.¹⁸

Again, in the poem 'Reveille' ('A Shropshire Lad' IV), Housman commands the lad to get up and hear the drums of morning playing. The lad who has died, among other things asks from the grave (in 'A Shropshire Lad' XXVIII) if the harness jingles now.

In order to find Housman using the word "piano" we must turn to a nonsense rhyme which his sister reprints in her recollections:

Oft when the night is chilly
And creation is ill at ease,
The piano twangles shrilly
As the cat walks over the keys.¹⁹

Yet it is in another of these comic verses that Housman displays at least some knowledge of the technical terminology of music. It was written in April 1875 (when A. E. H. was sixteen years old) to his step-mother in London; the entire letter is in none too remarkable versification, but, his sister writes in her memoir, "a whole page is given to the garden cries of birds—interesting evidence of his constant observation of wild things". Their "feathered conversation" contains musical terms in the last four lines:

Then one (piano) "Pretty Dick!"
One more (crescendo) "Quick! quick! quick!"
(Forte) "Look here! look here!" once more,
And so da capo, as before.²⁰

A few more examples of the many that Housman uses will suffice: in a poem entitled 'Summer' (also in Mrs. Symons's memoir) he speaks of

¹⁴ 'Additional Poems', XXI, *ibid.*, p. 236. Also here described are the house alight with psalm and censers and the people singing old tunes of the sacred psalters.

¹⁵ 'A Shropshire Lad', LVI, *ibid.*, p. 82.

¹⁶ 'A Shropshire Lad', III, *ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁷ 'A Shropshire Lad', XXXV, *ibid.*, p. 52.

¹⁸ 'Last Poems', VII, *ibid.*, p. 105.

¹⁹ Katharine E. Symons, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

the wind that "sings new music evermore";²¹ another poem written about the same time (when he was sixteen) on the ruins of Rome has a line—"But the wild bird still sings in the marshes";²² and then when the lad grew up he was to write of the soldier who has died in battle:

Throb of drum and timbal's rattle
Call but man alive to battle,
And the fife with death-notes filling
Screams for blood but not for yours.²³

These examples²⁴ indicate that although Housman was uninterested in the music of the concert-hall, he knew the emotional sensations produced by the unsophisticated tunefulness of the simplest kind of lyrical music—the folksong, the march, the "fife with death-notes filling". The passages quoted above make plain that he felt these sensations deeply and naturally. When he used some elementary and widely known musical terms, he used them to describe the sounds of nature, the country dances, soldiers marching, which are the most primitive of musical forms.

III

A. E. Housman told Mr. Withers that "such direct influences as he was conscious of were . . . the old ballads, Shakespeare's songs and Heine, and these he studied intensively before a line of 'A Shropshire Lad' was written".²⁵ This certainly seems to indicate what was succinctly proved in 1933 when Housman made the Leslie Stephen address at Cambridge on "The Name and Nature of Poetry": for him poetry was "not the thing said but a way of saying it".²⁶ In other words, when he further says the "poetry indeed seems to me more physical than intellectual", he is defining music as well as poetry, for great music has the same or almost the same physical character as great poetry. Let us look into Housman's one excursion into literary criticism to see what he has to say about this physical characteristic of poetry.

He had intended to talk on 'The Artifice of Versification', but had changed his mind and relegated a discussion of prosody to a footnote:

I mean such matters as these: the existence in some metres, not in others, of an inherent alternation of stresses, stronger and weaker; the presence in verse of silent and invisible feet, like rests in music; the reason why some lines of different length will combine harmoniously while others can only be so combined by great skill and good luck; why, while blank verse can be written in lines of ten or six syllables, a series of octosyllables ceases to be verse if they are not rhymed; how Coleridge, in applying the new principle which he announced in the preface to 'Christabel', has fallen between two stools; the necessary limit to the inversion of stress, which Milton understood and Bridges overstepped; why, of two pairs of rhymes, equally correct and both consisting of the same vowels and consonants, one is richer to the mental ear and the other poorer; the office of alliteration in verse, and how its definition must be narrowed if it is to be something which can perform that office and not fail of its effect or actually defeat its purpose.²⁷

What he does talk of is the *function* of poetry, which he says is "to transfuse emotion—not to transmit thought but to set up in the reader's

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 19–20. Note also 'Breathe, my lute, beneath my fingers' above (footnote 8).

²² Laurence Housman, 'A. E. H.: Some Poems, Some Letters and a Personal Memoir', p. 32; the poem 'Summer' is also reprinted on pp. 33–34. Notice how the embryonic poet usually connects music with nature, just as he was to do so often in 'A Shropshire Lad'.

²³ 'Last Poems' XXIX, 'Collected Poems', p. 132. The word "timbal" (usually spelt "tymbal") a kind of kettle-drum, is rather odd.

²⁴ Consult Clyde Kenneth Hyder, 'A Concordance to the Poems of A. E. Housman' (Lawrence, Kansas, 1940) for more examples of musical terminology.

²⁵ Percy Withers, 'A. E. Housman: Personal Recollections', 'The New Statesman and Nation' (London), n.s. XI (May 9th 1936), 700–701; see also 'A Buried Life', pp. 66–67.

²⁶ A. E. Housman, 'The Name and Nature of Poetry' (Cambridge University Press; New York, The Macmillan Company, 1933), p. 35. (The pagination I use is that of the American edition that of the English edition is slightly different.)

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4n.

sense a vibration corresponding to what was felt by the writer".²⁸ He then shows how the eighteenth century (and Dryden more than Pope) produced something else which gave intellectual pleasure: "sham poetry, a counterfeit deliberately manufactured and offered as a substitute".²⁹ But for Housman poetry is distinct from intellectual matters, and "even when poetry has a meaning, as it usually has, it may be inadvisable to draw it out . . . and perfect understanding will sometimes almost extinguish pleasure".³⁰ And to prove his point that poetry is not of the intellect, he says that the four men in whom one can hear the true poetic accent of the eighteenth century—Collins, Christopher Smart, Cowper and Blake—were all mad. He continues:

For me the most poetical of all poets is Blake. I find his lyrical note as beautiful as Shakespeare's and more beautiful than anyone else's; and I call him more poetical than Shakespeare, even though Shakespeare has so much more poetry, because poetry in him preponderates more than in Shakespeare over everything else, and instead of being confounded in a great river can be drunk from a slender channel of its own. Shakespeare is rich in thought, and his meaning has power of itself to move us, even if the poetry were not there: Blake's meaning is often unimportant or virtually non-existent, so that we can listen with all our hearing to his celestial tune.³¹

Finally, near the close of his stimulating address, Housman (who might just as well have been talking of the effect of music as of that of poetry) remarks:

Poetry indeed seems to me more physical than intellectual. A year or two ago, in common with others, I received from America a request that I would define poetry. I replied that I could no more define poetry than a terrier can define a rat, but that I thought we both recognized the object by the symptoms which it provokes in us. One of these symptoms was described in connection with another object by Eliphaz the Temanite: "A spirit passed before my face: the hair of my flesh stood up." Experience has taught me, when I am shaving of a morning, to keep watch over my thoughts, because, if a line of poetry strays into my memory, my skin bristles so that the razor ceases to act. This particular symptom is accompanied by a shiver down the spine: there is another which consists in a constriction of the throat and a precipitation of water to the eyes; and there is a third which I can only describe by borrowing a phrase from Keats's last letters, where he says, speaking of Fanny Brawne, "everything that reminds me of her goes through me like a spear". The seat of this sensation is the pit of the stomach.³²

Thus if we have "the organ by which poetry [and music, also] is perceived", which "the majority of civilized mankind notoriously and indisputably do not",³³ as Housman says, poetry and music will have such an effect on us. Those of the minority who do possess this organ for perception of music have, I am sure, felt the same way on listening to the songs of Schumann, Schubert or Brahms as Housman felt on listening to lines from Blake. It thus seems unnecessary to elaborate on the obvious close connection between A. E. Housman's ideas of poetry and the accepted ideas of music; for his descriptions of lyrical poetry can be applied almost word for word to any of the finest lyrical passages of music.

IV

One might next ask: Just how musical are Housman's lyrics? This may be discussed from two sides: first, the large number of composers who have written settings of 'A Shropshire Lad' and 'Last Poems'; and second, the prosody of these lyrics. The list is a long one, and has

²⁸. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

²⁹. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

³⁰. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

³¹. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

³². *Ibid.*, p. 45-46.

³³. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

never been published in its entirety;²⁴ I should like to give as full a list as I could possibly make it, with the dates mentioned only when known:

- Bax, Arnold, 'In the Morning.' London, Murdoch, Murdoch & Co. ('Last Poems' XXIII.)
- , 'When I was One-and-Twenty'; 'Far in a Western Brookland.' London, Enoch. ('A Shropshire Lad' XIII, LII.)
- Butterworth, George, 'Bredon Hill and Other Songs.' London, Augener Ltd. ('A Shropshire Lad' VI, XX, XXI, XXV, LIV.)
- , 'Six Songs from A Shropshire Lad.' London, Augener Ltd. ('A Shropshire Lad' II, XIII, XV, XXIII, XXVII, XLIX.)
- Douglas, Keith, 'Yonder See the Morning Blink.' Unpublished. ('Last Poems XI.)
- Foss, Hubert J., 'The New Mistress.' Oxford University Press. ('A Shropshire Lad' XXXIV.)
- Gardiner, H. Balfour, 'Leave Your Home Behind, Lad' ('The Recruit'); 'When I Was One-and-Twenty.' London, Goodwin & Tabb Ltd. ('A Shropshire Lad' III, XIII.)
- Gibbs, C. Armstrong, 'When I Was One-and-Twenty.' London, J. Curwen & Sons Ltd. ('A Shropshire Lad' XIII.)
- Gurney, Ivor, 'Ludlow and Teme.' Song-Cycle for tenor voice, string quartet and pianoforte. London, Stainer & Bell Ltd. ('A Shropshire Lad' VII, XIII, XXIII, XXIX, XXXV, XXXIX, LII.)
- , 'The Western Playland.' Song-Cycle for baritone voice, string quartet and pianoforte. London, Stainer & Bell Ltd. ('A Shropshire Lad' II, IV, X, XVII, XXVI, XXVII, XL, LIV.)
- Hamilton, Janet, 'In Summertime on Bredon' ('Bredon Hill'); 'Tis Time, I Think, by Wenlock Town'; 'With Rue My heart is Laden.' London, Winthrop Rogers Ltd. ('A Shropshire Lad' XXI, XXXIX, LIV.)
- Herbert, Muriel, 'Loveliest of Trees.' London, Augener Ltd. ('A Shropshire Lad' II.)
- Ireland, John, 'Hawthorn Time.' London, Winthrop Rogers Ltd. ('A Shropshire Lad' XXXIX.)
- , 'The Heart's Desire,' set for voice and pianoforte. London, Winthrop Rogers Ltd., 1917. ('A Shropshire Lad' X, omitting first two stanzas.)
- , 'The Land of Lost Content,' six songs with piano accompaniment. London, Augener Ltd., 1921. ('A Shropshire Lad' XXIX, LI, XVII, XXXIII, XXII, LVII.)
- Johnson, Ora Agatha, 'When I Was One-and-Twenty.' Los Angeles, R. W. Heffelfinger, 1915. ('A Shropshire Lad' XIII.)
- Lambert, Frank, 'The Street Sounds to the Soldiers' Tread.' London, Stainer & Bell Ltd. ('A Shropshire Lad' XXII.)
- Ley, Henry G., 'White in the Moon'; 'Far in a Western Brookland.' London, Stainer & Bell Ltd. ('A Shropshire Lad' XXXVI, LII.)
- Manney, Charles Fonteyn, 'A Shropshire Lad.' Boston, Oliver Ditson Co., 1914.
- Manson, Willie B., 'Three Poems from A Shropshire Lad.' London, Boosey & Co., 1920. ('A Shropshire Lad' II, XLIX, LVIII.)
- Marillier, Christabel, 'A Farewell.' London, J. Curwen & Sons Ltd., 1926. ('A Shropshire Lad' XXXIV.)
- , 'Loveliest of Trees.' London, Boosey & Co. ('A Shropshire Lad' II.)
- Mason, D. G., 'Songs of the Countryside,' Op. 23. New York, Ricordi, 1927.
- Milvain, Hilda, 'The Lent Lily.' London, Boosey & Co. ('A Shropshire Lad' XXIX.)
- Moeran, E. J., 'Loveliest of Trees.' London, J. Curwen & Sons Ltd., 1933. ('A Shropshire Lad' II.)
- , 'Ludlow Town,' four poems from 'A Shropshire Lad.' Oxford University Press, n.d. ('A Shropshire Lad' VII, VIII, XXIII, XXIV.)
- , 'Tis Time, I Think, by Wenlock Town'; 'Far in a Western Brookland.' London, Winthrop Rogers Ltd. ('A Shropshire Lad' XXXIX, LII.)
- Orr, C. W., 'The Carpenter's Son.' London, J. & W. Chester Ltd. ('A Shropshire Lad' VI, XIII, XLVII.)
- , 'A Cycle of Songs from A Shropshire Lad,' for baritone voice with piano accompaniment. London, J. & W. Chester Ltd., 1934. ('A Shropshire Lad' XXVI, XII, XXIX, VIII, XX, LXI, VII.)
- , 'The Isle of Portland.' London, J. & W. Chester Ltd., 1941. ('A Shropshire Lad' LIX.)
- , 'Loveliest of Trees'; 'Tis Time, I Think, by Wenlock Town.' London, J. & W. Chester Ltd. ('A Shropshire Lad' II, XXXIX.)
- , 'On Your Midnight Pallet Lying'; 'Oh, When I Was in Love with You'; 'This Time of Year a Twelvemonth Past'; 'Is My Team Ploughing?'; 'With

²⁴ See "A Bibliography of the Settings of Poems from 'A Shropshire Lad' by A. E. Housman", 'The Dominant' (London), I (February and March 1928), 26-29 and 35.

- Rue My Heart is Laden.' Oxford University Press. ('A Shropshire Lad' XI, XVIII, XXV, XXVII, LIV.)
- , 'Three Songs from A Shropshire Lad.' London, J. & W. Chester Ltd. 1941.
- Peele, Graham, 'Songs of a Shropshire Lad.' London, Chappell & Co. 1910. ('A Shropshire Lad' II, IV, VI, XXIV.)
- , 'Bredon Hill'; 'Soldier I Wish You Well.' London, Chappell & Co. ('A Shropshire Lad' XXI, XXII.)
- Priestley-Smith, Hugh, 'From the West Country.' London, Joseph Williams Ltd. ('A Shropshire Lad' XXXII, XXXVI, XL, XLIX.)
- Proctor-Gregg, Humphrey, 'The Land of Lost Content.' London, Stainer & Bell, Ltd. ('A Shropshire Lad' XL.)
- , 'Loveliest of Trees.' London, Joseph Williams Ltd. ('A Shropshire Lad' II.)
- Rose, Edwin C., 'The Far Country.' London, J. Curwen & Sons Ltd. ('A Shropshire Lad' XL.)
- Somervell, Arthur, 'A Shropshire Lad.' London, Boosey & Co. ('A Shropshire Lad' II, XIII, XIV, XXI, XXII, XXIII, XXXV, XXXVI, XL, XLIX.)
- Stewart, D. M., 'We'll to the Woods No More'; 'In the Morning'; 'The Sigh That Heaves the Grasses'; 'The First of May.' London, Elkin & Co. ('Last Poems,' Prefatory Verse, XXIII, XXVII, XXXIV.)
- Swain, Freda, 'Oh, Fair Enough Are Sky and Plain'; 'Bredon Hill'; 'White in the Moon'; 'Tis Time, I Think, by Wenlock Town'; 'Far in a Western Brookland.' Unpublished. ('A Shropshire Lad' XX, XXI, XXXVI, XXXIX, LII.)
- Taylor, E. Kendal, 'White in the Moon.' Oxford University Press. ('A Shropshire Lad' XXXVI.)
- Vaughan Williams, Ralph, 'Along the Field as We Came By' ('The Aspens'); 'With Rue My Heart is Laden.' Unpublished. ('A Shropshire Lad' XXVI, LIV.)
- , 'On Wenlock Edge,' a cycle of six songs for tenor voice with accompaniment of piano and string quartet. London, Boosey & Co., 1911. ('A Shropshire Lad' XXXI, XXXII, XXVII, XVIII, XXI, L.)
- , 'We'll to the Woods No More'; 'In the Morning'; 'The Half-Moon Westers Low'; 'The Sigh That Heaves the Grasses'; 'Fancy's Knell.' Unpublished. ('Last Poems,' Prefatory Verse, XXIII, XXVI, XXVII, XLI.)
- Young, Dalhousie, 'Bredon Hill.' London, Chappell & Co. ('A Shropshire Lad' XXI.)³⁶

In this list of settings, some forty of Housman's lyrics have been used of the one hundred and four in 'A Shropshire Lad' and 'Last Poems': twenty-six have been used once or twice, seven have been used three times, six have been used four times, three have been used five times. The most popular lyrics have been used thus: 'Tis Time, I Think, by Wenlock Town' ('A Shropshire Lad' XXXIX) six times; 'Bredon Hill' ('A Shropshire Lad' XXI) seven times; 'When I Was One-and-Twenty' ('A Shropshire Lad' XIII) eight times; and 'Loveliest of Trees' ('A Shropshire Lad' II) ten times. The popularity of these four among composers would seem to indicate that they are the most melodious; for we may assume (following Housman's own beliefs) that composers, who know nothing about the meanings of words in poems, choose them for their lyrical beauty. Incidentally, these four, along with 'Reveille' ('A Shropshire Lad' IV) and 'With Rue My Heart Is Laden' ('A Shropshire Lad' LIV), are the most popular among editors, for they have most often appeared in anthologies, as I have discovered by a careful inspection of about one hundred textbooks and compilations which contain poems by A. E. H.

Let us look into the beautiful lyric that begins with the line "Loveliest of trees." Housman does catch the spirit of a man twenty years old in his first recognition of the flight of time, his love of beauty and springtime, and his confidence of living fifty more years; but far greater than this slim

³⁶ It may be interesting to see Housman's attitude towards these composers who set his poetry: two letters from A. E. H. to his publisher Mr. Grant Richards give permission along with comment. The first is dated April 4th 1934: "Mr. Proctor-Gregg is at liberty to publish his setting of No. XL in 'A Shropshire Lad' and to give it as title 'The Land of Lost Content.'". The second was written August 22nd 1936: "Dr. Nicholls is at liberty to publish his settings of the poems which he has selected from 'A Shropshire Lad' except LXII, which would be absurd as a song: I do not object to his combining LVIII with LIX. Perhaps he had better be told that many of them have been set by other composers, and XIII by a considerable number." (See Cyril Clemens, 'A. E. Housman and His Publisher: A Series of Unpublished Letters', 'The Mark Twain Quarterly', to be published.)

intellectual idea—if it can indeed be called intellectual at all—is the beauty of the lines. There is no social implication, little philosophy, and the idea of cherry trees disporting themselves in the woodlands has been attacked: that leaves only one thing to recommend the poem, only one reason why it has been so widely used by composers for settings and by anthologists—its high lyric quality, its musical qualities, if you will.

Housman combines trochaic and iambic metres in this poem: the fourth, sixth and tenth lines are trochaic; and the rest are iambic, but the first and fifth have trochaic substitutions. Milton, who knew music well and was greatly influenced by this knowledge, uses this same combination of metres in two of his melodious poems, 'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso'. Again and again critics have spoken of Housman's 'poetic music' and his 'melodious verse'. One critic, for example, lists A. E. H. among 'the most musical English and American poets' of all time, the others being Chaucer, Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson, Swinburne, Yeats, Poe and Lanier.³⁶

V

My point is that Housman, with small musical background and showing little use of musical terminology in his poems and letters, and with a distaste for listening to complex, highly developed music, must have had (to put it tritely) music in his soul. This is shown by the lyrical quality of his poems and by the fact that many composers have attempted to catch his musical spirit by their settings. How successful have these composers been? John Ireland's 'The Heart's Desire' has been called "one of the most sympathetic musical versions inspired by that famous volume of lyrics",³⁷ and another musicologist says that C. W. Orr's 'Songs from A Shropshire Lad' is "distinguished, beautifully singable and playable, and full of opportunities for delicate rhythm and tone-colour".³⁸ But by far the most popular of all the settings and the one which has occasioned the most discussion is Ralph Vaughan Williams's 'On Wenlock Edge'. There are two schools of thought on the greatness of this song-cycle, one group contending that Vaughan Williams has done a beautiful interpretation of Housman, the other insisting that 'On Wenlock Edge' (despite its fame) is a gross misconception of what A. E. H. tried to say. Here is what A. Williams-Ellis, a prominent London book-reviewer, said on the occasion on the appearance of Housman's 'Last Poems':

I think not a few people who did not come under the influence of 'A Shropshire Lad' when it appeared have been put off by hearing 'Bredon Hill' set to music and sung in drawing-rooms in an orgy of sentimentality. Every rhythm is altered, every meaning falsified. But a single glance at the book itself or at 'Last Poems' will put right that misconception in any mind which had perceived and resented the same version.³⁹

Quite the contrary is this letter to 'The Times', written by a correspondent a few days after Housman's death:

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS AND HOUSMAN

To the Editor of 'The Times'

SIR,—As you so truly state in your to-day's issue, "Housman's poems hold in simple, imperishable form the simple, imperishable feelings of humanity." It might be well then at this juncture to remember another poet, a poet of music, Vaughan Williams. His settings to Housman's 'Shropshire Lad' have done more than anything else to make his poetry known to thousands of wireless listeners and to

³⁶ Jay B. Hubbell, 'An Introduction to Poetry' (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1936 [revised edition]), p. 53.

³⁷ Edwin Evans, 'John Ireland', 'The Musical Quarterly', V (April 1919), 219.

³⁸ Edmund Rubbra, 'Reviews of Music', 'Music & Letters' (London), XXII (July 1941), p. 297.

³⁹ A. Williams-Ellis, [Review of] 'Last Poems', 'The Spectator', CXXIX (November 4th 1922), p. 641. The reviewer also speaks of Housman's "peculiar musical quality."

all lovers of English poetry and music. Can anyone forget the haunting poignancy of Williams's interpretation of 'Summer Time on Bredon'? I think not.

Syon House, East Budleigh, S. Devon,
May 2.⁴⁰

I am, &c.,
ERNEST A. KNIGHT.

Two of the most eminent music critics, Ernest Newman and A. H. Fox Strangways, have both discussed 'On Wenlock Edge' at much greater length. Mr. Fox Strangways says of this first considerable work by which Vaughan Williams became known in England and elsewhere:

The plot of the cycle may be put in a sentence: the six poems consist of two reflections on life, three on different phases of love, and one on death. But music is not concerned with events so vague as those three; it can add nothing to the precision of the poet's thought. On the contrary, it almost invariably softens the outline. What music is concerned with is the man behind the events, with the tone of the voice behind the words, with the look in the eye, as it were, which may often belie the utterance of the tongue. . . . Yet the true song remains to be written, something with the bitter unloveliness in it of the naked truth as well as the greatness of the soul which dares contemplate that.

'A Shropshire Lad' presents just this sort of problem. The verse has charm, as everyone can feel, and a certain hard brilliance by which it is more than a match for the Elizabethans, as Mozart outdistances Palestrina. This is seen in the cold perfection of rhyme—"thinned—wind", "adze—lads", relieved by the rare license, "hanger—anger"; in the naturalness of alliteration—"He looked at me and beckoned, and laughed and led the way"; and in the blunt Saxon words and phrases—"Tis time, I think, by Wenlock town the golden bloom should blow". Most of those who have set Housman have been too much attracted by this charm to look further; and their music has accordingly aimed at, and compassed, smoothness or compactness. Yet the essence of Housman's poem is the fine contrast of this "icily regular" beauty with the boiling, battling thoughts below it, the level-voiced statement of vibrating truths, the unblenching cheek and unabashed eye that sees suicide, or adultery, or cowardice as they are and, without excusing, forgives. It is not the facts but the tone of mind to which music can address itself; and the music that could do so here would be alert, sensitive, unafraid, and in deadly earnest.

[Vaughan Williams's cycle] is entirely original and intensely meant. This is seen at once in the imitative parts. The "gale" in the first song has not so much the sound of actual wind as the feeling of the body being blown about while the mind is thinking; the bells in the fifth are unmistakable—they ring up and ring down, they toll for a funeral, and the echoes jangle them, but they are part, and part only, of the soft haze and the wide horizon, the warm sun and the scent of gorse, and the mind that feels all these; the thin voice of the ghost in the third song does not whine or pipe or gibber, but the harmonies have a sort of restricted, hypothetical feeling which makes the warm flesh and blood, that follows on, sound real and stern.

[This cycle] is rooted in folk-song; some see a strength in this impregnation, others a weakness in this coquetry. . . . [Some sources of strength are] power not so much of writing good melody. . . . as of finding what is interesting in a given melody. . . . Then there is a certain enterprise in the harmonic texture. . . . And thirdly, there is a constant effort, generally successful, to find a conduct of the music as sensitive as that of the words; there is never any feeling that he has "let them down". The part-writing too, is quite original; it contains no clichés; yet this is on the whole a less strong point. It is not agile nor dexterous; it moves too often in blocks, and is apt at times to sound heavy, if not clumsy; and if this is a defect, it shows that a downright artist cannot hope to always walk uprightly. On the other hand, what the cycle may lack in impetus it makes up in momentum, and the first song shows this well.⁴¹

I have quoted Mr. Fox Strangways at some length mainly because I wished to show the ideas a musicologist received from 'A Shropshire Lad', for he would see in the lyrics something that literary critics might miss. Mr. Newman, too, will be quoted more than he perhaps merits in this instance; but, while disagreeing with Mr. Fox Strangways about 'On Wenlock Edge' as a piece of music, he does say some fine and

⁴⁰ 'The Times' (London), May 9th 1936, p. 15.

⁴¹ A. H. Fox Strangways, 'Williams, Ralph Vaughan', 'Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music', compiled and edited by Walter Willson Cobbett (Oxford University Press, 1930), II, 584-586. The article, by the way, praises the recording of the cycle as sung by Gervase Elwes, which record was the one Mr. Withers played for Housman on that unfortunate evening.

interesting things about the very close connection between A. E. H. and music. Mr. Newman's article appeared in 'The Sunday Times' the week after Sir Edmund Gosse reviewed 'Last Poems'. Mr. Newman said that while 'A Shropshire Lad' "has always had perhaps an even greater fascination for the musician than for the lover of poetry; for nowhere in the English thesaurus is there verse more apt for music", 'Last Poems' did not beckon the composer so enticingly. And of the sixty-three lyrics in the 'Lad' "all but about half a dozen cried out for music: of the forty-one of the 'Last Poems', hardly more than half a dozen are first-rate material for the composer". The music critic continues:

English music has so far been unable to take advantage of the opportunities offered it by 'A Shropshire Lad'. Never before had an English poet produced so many poems that had all the qualities requisite to poetry that is to be set to music—concision and intensity in tone, the utmost simplicity of language, freedom both from involution of structure and from simile, and a general build that was virtually that of musical form.⁴³

This last remark is highly significant in view of what I have been insisting on in this paper. Mr. Newman then goes on to show how English composers failed to do with Housman's work what Schumann and his contemporaries in Germany did with Heine's 'Buch der Lieder'. (This, too, is important because Housman admits the influence of Heine on his poetry.) German poetry ran along the simple line that the musical lyric loves, while English poetry early developed a subtle variety of metre and cadence which even the expert composer is unable to put into musical dress. Housman's poetry, however,

reduced English verse to a folk-like simplicity . . . with no loss of poignancy—indeed, with an intensification of it. Almost any one of these poems gave the composer a central mood that was as truly musical as poetical, while the vicissitudes of the poetic mood also suggested the natural stages of a musical idea.⁴⁴

Despite this excellent material, Mr. Newman feels that Vaughan Williams's 'On Wenlock Edge' fails to do justice to its theme, in general because the lack of previous lyrical material in poetry had left no basis upon which a composer could build a lifework as a song-writer; thus the composer approached his task of setting Housman to music in a medium unfamiliar to his previous experience.⁴⁵ And he concludes that there is no English composer who can "pierce at one to the heart of the poem" and "capture the real mood".⁴⁶

VI

Now, Messrs. Fox Strangways and Newman do not differ on the musicality of Housman's poems, but only on whether Vaughan Williams achieved a true musical interpretation of the Shropshire lad. That there is much in the poetry all concerned have contended. And if Housman could put music into his poetry, assuredly he had the sense of music within him.

What, then, was the nature of this sense? Where he speaks pleasantly and feelingly of music, as in 'Last Poems' XLI, it is of the country folk-song to which the group dance and sing. A single flute carries the melody—could one imagine a more uncomplex production of music?—yet he

⁴³ Ernest Newman, 'Mr. Housman and the Composers', 'The Sunday Times' (London), October 20th 1922, p. 7.

⁴⁴ *Loc. cit.*

⁴⁵ For specific reasons for the failure of Vaughan Williams's cycle, Mr. Newman refers the reader to an earlier article: 'Concerning "A Shropshire Lad" and Other Matters', by Ernest Newman, 'Musical Times' (London), LIX (September 1918), 393-398. See also a review of Vaughan Williams's 'On Wenlock Edge', by Edwin Evans, 'Musical Times', LIX (June 1918), 247-250.

⁴⁶ *Loc. cit.* The bells which Mr. Fox Strangways likes so much strike Mr. Newman as Vaughan Williams's "over-insistence" upon "the external in a line", pictorial representation being easier than complete representation of the "real mood of the poem".

could apparently be bored by Beethoven's fifth Symphony. Was it too complex?

If Housman had no experience of great music, his reaction is understandable. He expressed praise of the *andante* movement. In the *allegro* first movement the structure is chiefly academic, using the strict sonata form, with a delight in the accomplishment of musical patterns which the untrained ear is at a loss to distinguish. In the *andante* the structure is melodic, the patterns in melody which the untrained ear could separate into self-sufficient units of song. A. E. H.'s lyrical sense called for purity of line and quick directness in development and conclusion. Might he not have enjoyed more a programme of songs by Schubert, whose lyrical simplicity was akin to that of his own poems?

Music was an intuitive sense in him which was never developed beyond its most elementary stages. As a youth, his sister says, Alfred joined the family in glee-singing—this was probably what was meant when she said that one of her father's hobbies was "music"—not concert music but simple lyrical folksongs by which Housman's ear was trained to uncomplicated melody? As a grown man he could still write feelingly of dancing at evening to the flute, yet could sit untouched by the musical masterpieces of the century.

He shows a profound academic knowledge of highly developed and complex poetry—but by self-admission he does not feel it as essentially as he does the "slender channel" of pure lyricism. His foundation in music is the same, except that he was never exposed to training in developed forms, and his knowledge, as well as his taste, remained to his death attuned to the simplicity of the undeveloped lyric tune.

Note.—Since completing this article I have received Grant Richards's highly important and long-promised 'Housman: 1897-1936' (Oxford University Press, 1941). It contains a world of information on the subject of A. E. Housman's connection with music, including (on pp. 452-453) Stanley Bayliss's 'Housman and the Composer' reprinted from 'The Listener' of April 11th 1940, and several references to Vaughan Williams (pp. 87, 88, 90, 157, 181, 197, 209, 216, 221, 394). The other references to music (pp. 6, 10, 11, 34, 54, 63, 73, 78, 81, 86, 95, 101, 105, 111, 119, 154, 254, 264, 280, 283-284, 459) deal largely with permission of composers to set Housman's lyrics to music. The letter referred to in footnote 11 above is printed in 'Housman: 1897-1936' (pp. 181-183); in it A. E. H. expresses his annoyance at Vaughan Williams's having cut two verses out of 'Is my team ploughing': "I wonder how he would like me to cut two bars out of his music". To which Williams replies (on p. 221): "The composer has a perfect right artistically to set any portion of a poem he chooses provided he does not actually alter the sense."

Like Mr. Richards, I do not agree with the composer in this case. But this is all beside the point at the moment. What is to the point is that Mr. Richards's volume adds a good deal of minute information to my subject, but does not alter my central thesis.

Extracts from poems by A. E. Housman are printed above by kind permission of the Incorporated Society of Authors, Playwrights and Composers, and of the Trustees of the Estate of the late A. E. Housman.—Ed.

MUSICAL CULTURE IN ENGLAND AND U.S.A.

BY W. H. MELLERS

WE hear nowadays so much talk of culture, and what is to be done about it after the war, that we find it difficult to keep in mind what are the fundamental issues involved, particularly when the object of culture in question is one so apparently impractical as music. We are told, quite rightly, that our civilization, in clumsily attempting to adapt itself to a machine technique, has put so much stress on technical education that the humanities have gone for nothing; but we are also told, misleadingly, that if, after the war, everyone is given the chance to acquire (say) a musical education all our difficulties will vanish and we shall generate automatically a race of string quartet players performing with competence the quartets of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Unfortunately culture in the deepest sense is not something that can be dictated from above by powers however benevolent; it is something that happens when people want it. If people have the opportunity and desire to live relatively rich lives they will inevitably express themselves creatively and acquire the means (the "technique") to do so. This explains the enormous artistic richness of Tudor England, however inadequate its drainage system. The lives the people led created the language they spoke, and the language made possible Shakespeare; the remarkably high level of technical competence in music, the astoundingly high level of taste (from the folk upwards) and the very large crop of composers major and minor existed because the surviving manorial order preserved an organic contact between all classes of men, moral and social (and between the utmost degree of local simplicity and European sophistication in musical technique); because music was an active part of life, a job to be done, whether in praise of God or the enlivening of home or village green. All music was contemporary, and religious or domestic. Musical culture was not merely a training for or against life; it was also life manifesting itself.

For us who, living in a society based on a machine technique, cannot and should not hope for any re-creations of vanished glory, the notion of training is bound to be paramount in musical as in any other culture; but we should realize that only when we have built a society which, while being fundamentally industrial, nonetheless allows its members to live lives that are fully human and not, as heretofore, self-stultifying, shall we have any chance of producing a real musical culture. Then the level of public taste will rise *from within*, and although Greensleeves may never again be my delight, neither will the Sheik of Araby. This is why I do not think there is such a thing as musical culture apart from what one might call sociology. Obviously this more organic society is still far distant; in the meantime I do think it is important that we should not forget the central problems in our concern with the necessary compromising measures.

That energy and initiative in these compromising measures are extremely important should go without saying; for in times of transition and social chaos, when people's emotional lives are grievously muddled and impoverished, it becomes imperative for the artist to help the blind to see and the deaf to hear. Though the artist himself cannot create the

bases of an "artistic" society, he can inculcate respect for the values from which, in the long run, such a society might be born. This is why, to my mind, some of the most culturally significant of contemporary music has been written by Americans, particularly Aaron Copland and Marc Blitzstein.¹ The manner in which Blitzstein has taken over a social idiom which has been used for perverted ends (thereby preserving some kind of organic contact with an audience), and then by the extreme distinction of his musical sensibility has invested it with the power to hit back, seems to me an achievement of greater importance for music's future than that of many composers of much greater pretensions. Inextricably linked with American speech—itsself a product of industrialism—we have here a music that is completely urban and industrial and at the same time beautifully sensitive, alive and *human*. Similarly the typical urban clarity and tenderness of Copland's music reveals itself in an idiom of sharply articulated organization and of a diaphanous texture exquisitely adapted to microphone, cinema and mechanistic treatment generally. It may be that to the average Hollywood movie music of such distinction as Copland's would not be apposite; but even if the public did not like or (which is more probable) did not notice Copland's beautiful music to commercially successful films such as 'Our Town' and 'Of Mice and Men', I feel convinced that it would in time open up a new world of musical experience to many who are only waiting to recognize it for what it is—the incarnation in sound of feelings, desires, apprehensions which most people in an urban community will have had, however blindly and inarticulately. Copland's wonderful lucidity of technique and texture is the result of his maturity in dealing with experience that leaves most people chaotic; and although one or two men alone cannot redeem us from that chaos, and cannot alone restore serious contemporary music to a position of dignity and function in our social life, at least it is encouraging to have such fine examples of what a contemporary music adequate to its environment (in an environment adequate to it) might be like.

In England composers have been much less concerned with the problem of creating an urban vernacular and with the social justification for it, partly because the spoken language here is not the creative one but follows tentatively in the wake of industrial American, and partly because the existence here of a rich and varied musical past means both that the creatively feeble may hide under its shadow and that the strong may exploit their awareness of continuity in a manner that is necessarily denied to the integral American artist. I think that the lack of a vital contact with modern speech is responsible for what now seems to be the provinciality of the English "folky" school, and also at the other extreme for the unsatisfying cosmopolitanism—the lack of an adequate centre—of Benjamin Britten.² Only two contemporary English composers, Edmund Rubbra and Michael Tippett, seem to me to have solved the problem of writing music that (less stably of course than Byrd or Gibbons) is both contemporary and traditional, both local and European; and it is significant that when, in his oratorio 'A Child of Our Time', Tippett attempts a work with social connotations similar to Blitzstein's, the tension between the contemporary speech-rhythm of his recitative and the complexity of his "traditional" organization produces a work much more difficult, inaccessible and in a sense specialized in appeal than the American's. Rubbra is content with the less conscious

¹ Marc Blitzstein is now in England in the U.S. Army. It is to be hoped that some of his work will soon be given an English performance.

² In his most recent works, however, particularly the Quartet and the 'Hymn to St. Cecilia', I believe that Britten is beginning to discover such a centre.

and (except for an artist of great vitality) more dangerous method of allowing the re-creation of a relatively familiar past to provide the contemporary contact with his audience.

In their different (American and European) ways Copland and Blitzstein, Rubbra and Tippett all show that the composer's problems to-day cannot be separated from the listener's; for the essential contact with the audience is not likely to come until a more balanced attitude to the evolution of musical tradition is diffused through the majority of musical people. Not only do we listen almost exclusively to music of the past, instead of making music ourselves, but we listen only to one narrow strip of it. To thousands of people nowadays "music" means the week-end performances of the piano concertos of Tchaikovsky, Rakhmaninov and perhaps Beethoven, while even the average academy student has usually little musical experience outside the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The simpler history books, "approaches", "guides", &c. still, so far as I can see, usually adopt the patronizing doing-not-so-badly-with-limited-resources attitude to the sixteenth century and are content to leave the medieval ages—after all probably the greatest period in European history—musically in limbo. But no one thinks of referring to the "progress" of the English language from Chaucer to Shakespeare: it is accepted that they incarnate distinct civilizations, and persons making any claim to literary cultivation are willing to make the small effort necessary to overcome the slight unfamiliarity of Chaucer's language. Clearly, the more discriminately we listen to music of the past, the more we see our musical experience in perspective, the more we can define a conception of the *totality* of the European tradition into which we can fit our attitude to Bach and Mozart and Beethoven (rather than defining an attitude to these great composers on to which we can often quite irrelevantly hang everything else)—the more chance, then, we have of becoming the sensitive and creative beings who will make possible the kind of society in which Copland and Blitzstein will be *really* popular composers. Of course it will be objected that time and human endurance are not infinite, and that to obtain any idea of "the totality of the European tradition" is the labour of a lifetime. So it is, so is all education. Our musical experience is not static, it grows and flowers, if we will let it. What matters is not what we know, but the pliability and integrity of our minds and feelings, the clarity with which we approach the unfamiliar, our ability to "place" what we hear in our own scale of values, to make up our minds what we really feel and why. (Never mind whether we are "right".) This is why I think the job of the musical educator is, in relatively artificial cultural conditions, potentially so important; and it will become more so as the evolution of a more international society brings with it contacts with the musics of non-European social groups.

I have been speaking largely, of course, of musical culture as it affects the "average" man, not the musical student, because this is the fundamental issue. In the first place music is something made by men for men, and the idea of specialization (the shutting off of music from the other great branches of knowledge and thought and feeling) is itself symbolic of the synthetic nature of our culture. It is curious that music, the least practical of the arts, should have given rise in its technical specialists to exactly the same kind of technical competence combined with moral and intellectual obtuseness as is found (of course with the significant exceptions) in the exponents of practical techniques. This is merely another example of the lack of social relevance in our musical

culture; we have still to learn that there can be no such thing as "musical" education apart from an education of the emotions.

One cannot have a more organic relation between the contemporary composer and his audience without the relatively wide diffusion of a more organic attitude to musical tradition; and one cannot have such an attitude without the recovery of at least a degree of mutual social obligation between composer and people. It is precisely because the creative and educational aspects of the case are virtually one that I believe infiltrations of British and American musical culture to be of such potential importance to the future of the English-speaking world. We want a musical culture which is truly contemporary, based on the needs of the present, manifesting itself in active creation and performance of contemporary music; and we need also to see this contemporary activity in perspective, against the background of the past. We may not seem to have got very far, but there is a growing demand for reciprocal give and take between composers and listeners, and an increasing number of people is beginning to realize that music must perish unless men use it in their everyday lives. It will not live in the artist's ivory tower (whether you blame the artist or the people), and it will not live in the scholar's (necessary) researches; musicians, in all the chatter about reconstruction, would do well to remember what should be self-evident—that the problems of musical culture to-day are inseparable from the problems of civilization; that if we fail in the one we shall inevitably fail in the other.

MUSIC IN FILMS

BY ERNEST IRVING

THE cynical musician, if such there be, contemplating such a title in such surroundings, might consider that music in films should be treated as Horrebrow dealt with snakes in Iceland¹ in his famous essay. But I have seen a snake in Iceland: cold, torpid and obtrusive perhaps, an uncomfortable, unacclimatized and unwelcome visitor, but a snake; and I am therefore not to be put off by malicious or uninformed innuendo of dipsomania or pseudoblepsis. Also, one remembers that film incidental music is a development of theatre incidental music; that great men mentioned respectfully in 'Music & Letters' have written music for the theatre; and that their success has not always been proportionate to their abilities and reputations. Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Sibelius, Bizet, Grieg, Sullivan, German, Stanford, Delius and other eminent composers are in the list. Beethoven's theatre music is of course magnificent, but there is very little of it²; Mendelssohn's 'Midsummer Night's Dream' is more suitable to the Albert Hall than to Drury Lane; and Sibelius's 'Tempest', though the loudest ever, is not likely to become standard practice. Other masters have written incidental music which is still popular and frequently played. Sometimes the music has outlasted the play, as that of Beethoven for 'Egmont', Delius for 'Hassan', German for 'Nell Gwyn', Bizet for 'L'Arlésienne' and O'Neill for 'Mary Rose'. Frequently it was too good for the play and occasionally too strong for the actors. I remember a particularly lush—not to say rank—violin solo which accompanied the death of Cyrano de Bergerac

¹. *Vide* Dr. Johnson, April 13th 1778.

². Have you ever heard any of the 'Egmont' music except the overture?

and proved so appealing to the "vulgar plebs" that all eyes were riveted on the cellist instead of the dying hero.³ Irving, Tree and other actor-managers used full orchestras to play their incidental music, and occasionally, as in 'The Sign of the Cross', a large choir was employed. In the last-named "drama", which ran successfully for years, the Christians thrown to the lions sang, in good solid four-part harmony, a "hymn" which became a best-seller and was heard on all the barrel-organs in conjunction with the Intermezzo from 'Cavalleria rusticana'.⁴ It may have been intended as a deterrent, but the lions apparently regarded it as an *apéritif*. Stanford and Mackenzie both composed scores for Irving in the Lyceum days, orchestrated for thirty or forty players. Musicians were cheaper then: nowadays a string quartet and a piano are the most to be found beneath the screen of palms which conceals the wide, open, untenanted spaces of the orchestra pit. Even these are disappearing, and an amplified gramophone, called a panatrophe,⁵ is supplanting the live players. This contraption, which at first emitted a miserable noise, has been much improved in recent years, so that composers who require a full orchestra to express their ideas may record their music and hope to hear a reasonably faithful reproduction through loudspeakers. This method gives advantages in control of balance which are not to be denied, a case in point being William Walton's music to 'Macbeth', which, recorded by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, proved very effective in the theatre.⁶

When the moving picture—called, I believe, the Bioscope—first made its appearance, it was of course mute, and music had to be provided to accompany the action and drown the noise of the projection machines. These "living pictures" were shown principally in music-halls, and the waltzes of Waldteufel, somewhat surprisingly preferred to those of Strauss and Gung'l, were considered to be the correct musical accompaniment. At the Palace Theatre, London, where Herman Finck reigned as musical director, the Bioscope always ended the programme. To side-step 'Les Patineurs' and 'Les Sirènes' Finck composed a whole library of short, light, characteristic pieces of considerable merit, some of which, afterwards published, became very popular at pierheads and during theatre intervals. As the moving picture developed, its music developed with it, and soon we saw upon the screen "productions" which excelled in magnitude the most lavish Drury Lane "spectacles", demanding a corresponding grandiloquence in the musical setting, which had to be tailor-made more or less to fit, like the famous fur coat of "Druriolanus".⁷ Some of the bolder exhibitors like D. W. Griffith had special descriptive music written for their films and travelled an orchestra to play it, complete with conductor. The latter functionary had no sinecure, either. He had to keep the music running synchronously with the film and was responsible for seeing that all the sound effects, both dramatic and comic, were heard at exactly the split second designed. The speed of the film was determined by the operator's caprice, and on occasion was known to vary according to the number of the audience, the proportion of "early doors" and even to the closing hours of the local hostelry. *Tempo rubato* was therefore the order of the evening, and the approach of eleven o'clock produced an *accelerando* comparable with the swoop of a comet to its perihelion. In

³ When Robert Lorraine discovered this he had the solo transferred to the viola, and all eyes were lifted from the orchestra pit to the stage scene.

⁴ The barrel-organs played them both quite briskly, *tremolando ma con brio*.

⁵ Derivation presumably *Pana-trophe* and not *Pan-Aitropos*.

⁶ Ghost effects and other "music i'th'air" are more convincingly emitted from a non-corporeal source.

⁷ Sir Augustus Harris, caricatured by "Spy".

the stationary kinemas, the music was selected each week by the resident musical director in accordance with a list of "suggestions" sent out with the film. The size of the orchestras varied from thirty down to five, and a large catalogue of music, arranged in categories to suit every possible action or sentiment, appeared in Charing Cross Road. Second- and third-rate composers found a ready market for their talents, and hundreds of little pieces of dramatic music were printed, playable on any combination from one instrument to one hundred.

The harmonium and "Mustel" organ appeared, to deputize for the wind instruments, in the small halls; and the quality of the music was frequently the deciding factor in competition between two kinemas. Violent hands were laid upon the classics. The first movement of the Schubert "unfinished" Symphony appeared in the catalogues as "a light, flowing *agitato*", Handel's 'Largo' (addressed originally by Xerxes to a planetree) became "a solemn melody suitable for church or cathedral scenes", and Beethoven's 'Coriolanus' was recommended as "suitable for tree-felling or lumber-rolling". If the conductor wished to modulate from the Tchaikovsky "Pathetic" Symphony to Ambroise Thomas's 'Hamlet', he simply made a *diminuendo e rallentando* and faded his orchestra out; then the horn player, if he had one, found, if he could, the dominant of the new key and played a waxing and waning semibreve, giving the orchestra time to turn over, and find the new starting-post. The drummer sat surrounded by percussion contrivances, including timpani, bass-drum, side-drum, cymbals, triangle, glockenspiel, xylophone, wood-blocks, gongs, tubular bells, tambourine, castanets and coconut shells⁸; while in his mouth, or close to hand, he held, ready for action, syrens, whistles, bird-trill, cuckoo, hooter and mouth-organ. He had to be ready to imitate a whip, a rooster, an explosion, the tearing of linen, a knockout punch, a bicycle bell, a donkey's bray (although the trombone sometimes obliged), a champagne cork, a lion's roar, and indeed to supply with sound the hundred-and-one "effects" as they appeared on the screen. He had to watch the picture for these effects, and to watch the conductor for the changes of music, besides getting in, as best he could, the printed percussion parts found in the scores of the "New World" Symphony, the overture to 'William Tell', the 'Marche militaire' or the 'Grenadiers Waltz'. How he did it I do not know, and what he was paid for it I could not guess; but manage it he did, and he must have been well paid to be able to acquire the pantechmicon-load of shining sonorities by which he was encircled.

Ingenuity worthy of a better cause was exhibited by some of the composers who cashed in on their birthright by writing the short descriptive pieces now required in great numbers. Here are some of the dramatic titles: 'Ashes of Vengeance', 'Passionate Remembrance', 'Blizzard', 'Supreme Peril', 'Help! Help!', 'The Dread Tribunal', 'The Lure of Crimson', 'Foreboding', 'Distressful Situation', 'Catastrophe'. The underworld was provided for under such headings as 'The Drug', 'Frowzy Freddy', 'Gruesome Misterioso', 'The Crook's Shadow', 'The Spectre'. Domestic affairs evoked 'Love's Response', 'Honeymoon', 'Road to Sorrow', 'Rocking and Waiting',⁹ 'Dark Intruder', 'Broken Vows' and 'Love's Yearning'. Other engaging film personalities were put into the third dimension by 'Le Traître', 'Blotto', 'Creepy Creeps', 'Cops' and 'The Black-mailer'. Some of these *morceaux* were worked out with considerable

⁸ These were used to imitate galloping horses. I have heard them used over the Quorn with the fox in view.

⁹ A cradle song, not a sea-piece.

musical talent and they were, it must be admitted, quite suitable for the fell work they were called upon to do. Like the ice-cream tricycle, they could be stopped or started anywhere; the best of them had a latent store of pseudo-contrapuntal energy which could be unleashed at any time in a sudden *crescendo* involving trombones and percussion, and subdued in half a bar to a mere murmur of violas. If the villain, harassed by conscience, was moved to drown himself in Barking Creek, music could be found to note the celebration of the idea with a horn *sforzando*, follow him, *agitato*, through the avenues of Canning Town, pause with him by the bollard on the embankment and plunge with a brazen splash into the murky flood, dying away through a widening and weakening cymbal-concentric on the Roding's swelling breast:—all this with a simple opus by Becce or Savini. The works of Coleridge¹⁰ Taylor were a Tom Tiddler's ground for the kinema maestro. That gifted young man composed a great deal of dramatic music for Tree and others, below the level of the masters, but considerably superior to the hacks, and some of his most famous tunes became familiar to the public by their continual use in all kinds of films. The lesser works of Liszt, Schumann, Chopin, Rakhmaninov and especially Tchaikovsky were seized, "arranged" and fitted into one of the categories mentioned above.

And then, as Jack London would say, "the thing happened". Came the miracle of the film that talked, and like the leaves on Vallombrosa's brooks, the kinema orchestras disappeared, conductor, drummer and all. The leaves in the kinema music library became so much waste paper, and the empty orchestra pit became the den of a new and monstrous machine, an electric complex of wobbling wails called a "Wurlitzer". This phenomenon, hidden in darkness on the mezzanine floor, upheaved at the interval in an incandescent tremolando, equipped with a player apparently belayed to his seat. Having assisted at the sale of chocolates and ice-cream, and gilded with glistering gambas the promises of next week's "attraction", it subsided again to its oozy bed; its glow faded and died, and its sound was heard no more. Its operator was free to go, like Gilbert's sentry in 'The Gondoliers', in search of beer and beauty. For the film shown on the screen now carried its own music, contemptuously labelled by the displaced musicians as "canned".

By a most ingenious, not to say miraculous process, the entire sound of the film—songs, dialogue and incidental music, beside unmusical noises of all kinds—was recorded upon a strip of celluloid .076 of an inch wide, which was integral with the picture (or "mute") and was consequently always in exact synchronization with it. And here, a word to the Pharisees, who accept this miracle as a matter of course, or even dismiss it with contempt as "tinned" music. For commercial reasons the sound-track has to pass through the projector at the same speed as the "mute", namely 90 ft. a minute. If the sound-track were made and projected at, say, twice this speed it would be possible to hear in a kinema a more perfect performance of a musical work than any listener can purchase in the Albert Hall. The difficulties are purely commercial, and are practically limited to the provision of the necessary machinery, with proper supervision. To prove this probably startling statement it would be necessary to enter into a technical disquisition unsuitable to this journal; and I will merely explain that the modulations made on the negative by the upper frequencies are so exceedingly minute that they would be smaller than the "grain" of the emulsion. Twice the speed gives twice the room, and at 180 ft. per minute overtones could appear that are inaudible at 90 ft. As it is the overtones

¹⁰ Kinematically called Collierij.

that give characterization to the instrumental sounds, it is easy to see the improvement that is possible. A concert-goer can never receive optimum sound: according to the position of his seat he is subject to echoes, reverberations, maskings and distortion. The sound could be scientifically collected for him by properly arranged microphones and delivered to him as a correctly balanced whole. Anyone who has listened to the same opera from the stalls and from the amphitheatre of Covent Garden will appreciate the advantages enjoyed by the galleryites, though the gallery at Covent Garden is so far away from the stage that the conductor always seems half a bar in front of the sound and the expression on the faces of the singers is indistinguishable.¹¹ The recorded film can give the listener the advantages without the disadvantages.

The reader may now pertinently inquire why music of anything approaching first-class quality is never heard in a kinema. To begin with, the action of a film develops along entirely different lines from those of a sonata or symphony—or even of a rhapsody or a symphonic poem. It is episodic in its nature and moves straight ahead without variation, working-out or recapitulation. If the music is part of the action it is entirely realistic, and if it is used as “background” it is ancillary and complementary. It is sometimes used to illustrate, but that is generally in a bad film or at a bad patch in a good film, for the “mute”, being after all only an illustration, should be able at least to illustrate itself. Music is more frequently used to intensify, underline, accelerate or aggrandize, to cause excitement and to affect the subconsciousness of the audience. Its appeal must be eighty per cent. subconscious because it has to operate upon a large body of people of whom at least eighty per cent. are non-musical.

Some of this unenlightened majority have, it is true, been introduced to good music by the radio; but the acquaintance remains a nodding one. Schubert, or even Mozart, may be tolerated as an anodyne when washing up, with a rush to transfer to the “Forces” if the announcer should breathe the name of Bach or Brahms. Somewhere around the eighty per cent. Plimsoll-mark is the fringe that knows its Beethoven, Schubert, Mozart, Handel, Bach and Elgar as the composers of the Victory Sign, ‘Lilac Time’, ‘An Eighteenth-Century Drawing-Room’ (swing tempo), the Hallelujah Chorus, the ‘Air on the G String’ and ‘Land of Hope and Glory’ (or possibly ‘Nimrod’). But the submerged four-fifths cares nothing for names and has no musical criteria to distinguish between Korsakov and Ketèlbey, Haydn and Heykens, Spohr and Spoliansky. They watched in Deanna Durbin’s masterpiece a symphony orchestra recruited in a café rehearsing the overture to ‘Zampa’ without music or stands, and, echeloned on a staircase, giving a perfect performance of Berlioz without a conductor, and with Adolph Menjou making wrong entries upon the tenor trombone; all this without turning a hair. They enjoyed the theme-song, nicely performed by Miss Durbin, and were mildly surprised when (or if) they were informed that it was written by that promising young man Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.¹² But they have all paid for admission and will cheerfully damn your film, including the music, if any further demands are made upon their intelligence and taste.

Then the music has to share the sound-track, which is only about as wide as a bootlace, with all kinds of unmusical noises; dialogue,

¹¹. This may be considered not an unmixed disadvantage, and the sound is much better than that heard by the stallites.

¹². They probably thought he was a son of George Mozart, a famous music-hall one-man band.

commentary, trains, explosions, chatter, footsteps, telephone bells and a dozen other "natural" sounds which the film editor considers essential to his opus. In mixing these noises the "dubber"—that is the technical name for the assassin who twiddles the knobs of the re-recording panel—uses the music as a child treats plasticine, prodding and squeezing and thumbing off redundancies without "mitigation or remorse", so that it is seldom indeed that the music can display any complexity of structure or continuity of line that it may originally have possessed. In some ways this is good for music, as it protects symphonic masterpieces from mutilation and unanatomical amputations by the "cutting-room" scissors. There have been attempts, mostly unsuccessful, to put the lives of great musicians on the screen: their failure has been largely due to the impossibility of letting the music speak for itself. It is naturally impossible to screen a complete opera or symphony and then expect to sell the film; even an aria that lasts four minutes has to be clipped and condensed, and it is only to be endured if the "mute" continually flits from performer to listener or to some objective idea which the film director thinks may have "motivated" (horrid word) the composition. People move about, talk, open and shut doors, poke the fire and do all kinds of things that would be considered the height of bad manners in a concert-room, or even in a twentieth-century drawing-room. Comic opera, by reason of its formal construction, has not been successfully screened, but musical comedy, which is of more accommodating texture, has received glamorous film settings which have sometimes been preferred to the stage version by its votaries.

Walt Disney's 'Fantasia', though a little like the curate's egg, shows a most remarkable advance in the screening of good music, and it is greatly to be regretted that no British exhibitor had the courage to equip a British cinema with the necessary apparatus for projecting the music from multiple synchronous sound-tracks, as was done in New York. My American musical friends tell me the result was astonishing, and I can well believe them. Disney makes one serious psychological mistake in that his announcer, a well-known American musician, states in the prologue that we are to be shown pictorial representation of ideas and emotions that may be roused *in us* by the music. This evokes a hostile reaction and retards our appreciation of Promethean lightning flashing along furrows, which is alleged to be the way *we* picture fugal entries in a well-known Bach work. We do get used to it, however, and it may conceivably act as an index for those to whom counterpoint connotes a war-time purchase of prunes. The 'Casse-Noisette' ballet is a legitimate—and charming—expansion of theatre technique, though I found the limning of 'L'Apprenti sorcier' severely shackling to the imagination. It was good to hear Stravinsky's 'Sacre du printemps' so well played: it is rarely heard in England, and one need not look at the ichthyosaurs and dinosaurs wallowing in the primeval slime unless one wishes. Mussorgsky's 'Bald Mountain' is well played and well illustrated. There is an interval in this film which provides the opportunity for a discreet exit, avoiding some painful Pegaso-Pastoral Beethoven, some twopence-coloured Schubert and further nonsense uninteresting to musicians. I am bound to say that the submerged eighty per cent seemed thoroughly to enjoy Beethoven's brook looking like the Kennet at Newbury, with flying horses landing like seaplanes upon its ample flood. With all its faults this is a notable film and deserved a greater success than it has, I believe, attained. From it many thousands of non-musicians learned that "highbrow" music is not so formidable after all.

Recently there has been a welcome tendency on the part of film "magnates" to commission musicians of répute to provide scores for the films. Notably Bax, Bliss, Vaughan Williams and Walton have turned their hands to this with great profit to all concerned. It is pleasant to see the wealthy film companies taking the rôle of Maecenas and paying British composers sums which should get them into serious trouble with the income tax and enable them to write all the chamber music they want to without moving into a garret—unless it is at the Dorchester. There is no reason why a master *should* write more effective film music than a hack, for artistic merit and authenticity of style have no "film value" *per se*, but it is pleasing to record that in point of fact they do. They cannot use their ordinary methods of symphonic expression, but there is no reason why they should not slip in a little counterpoint, so long as it doesn't get in the way of the film. Walton, in fact, used a fugue to describe the making of a Spitfire, a good fugue, too, and most effectively applied. Walton has done specially well with film music, his sardonic humour and virtuosity in orchestration being assets of the utmost value. He has a fine eye for dramatic effect and a quick grasp of the needs of a film which appeal instantly to those uncannily gifted gentlemen who know what the public wants, and give it what it deserves.

Arthur Bliss's music to 'Things to Come' hits off Wells's ideas exactly and has enough intrinsic character to stand alone. The suite made from its themes has established itself in the concert repertory and is frequently played.

Dr. Vaughan Williams's score for 'Coastal Command' was perhaps not quite up to his best standard; neither was it particularly good film music. Solid, musicianly and melodious, of course: Wardour Street will touch its hat and remain unimpressed.

Sir Arnold Bax's score for 'Malta G.C.' is an excellent fit, giving that noble theme the illustration it requires. There is nothing atonal or high-falutin' about it: it is good, solid, Willett-built English music, with a tune at the top, a foundation below and good six-part oak beams in between. Plenty of cymbal and strident brass, as becomes the subject, and a good diatonic, honest Elgarian tune to wind up with, as befits the Master of the King's Music. It was a splendid idea to broadcast the music alone, so that the public could hear it once as the composer intended, and it will be interesting to see what the "mixers" have done to it in the re-recording. Frederic Austin, known to most people only through 'The Beggar's Opera' and, in my opinion, an underrated composer, has written some fine dramatic music for a film about Yugo-Slavian guerrillas. I think that will not be his last score for the screen.

Among Continental composers Prokofiev, Honegger and Milhaud in particular have written music for the screen. It all bears the hall-mark of mastership, and much of it is ingenious and novel; but I find them disappointing, especially Honegger, who completely spoiled one of the cleverest cartoons by experimenting with some electrical monstrosity that suggested the tromba marina. I do not know if Shostakovich has written film music, but he could.¹³

As for the American composers, they get more sound on to the track than the other three corners of the world united, and seem satisfied with that. In fairness I should add that the sub-Plimsollites seem to be satisfied too, and many of our film critics in their adulation of anything from

¹³ According to a recent list his Opp. 18, 26, 30, 33, 36, 41, 45, 48, 50-53, 55 and 56 are all film music. Except for a suite from 'Golden Mountains', Op. 30 it is all in manuscript.—Eo.

Hollywood approve background music that suggests a tiger in the bathroom.

Among home-grown musicians of lesser fame are many who are expert in the technical task of fitting music to films. Anthony Collins, John Greenwood, Richard Addinsell are names that spring to the pen. Originality is not demanded of them, indeed, a little honest plagiarism is often an advantage. As George Edwardes, king of Victorian theatre-managers, once remarked when a composer pointed out an "imitation" in a brother composer's work: "My boy, if they half know the tune, you've got half a success." Addinsell has recently made a best-seller of what his publishers call a "concerto" which he would be the first to admit shows resemblance to well-known tunes, one of which is by Rakhmaninov. The sub-Plimsollites stormed the music and gramophone shops for copies and records of the "concerto"; and the sales, I am told, far exceeded those of the model, while the success of the music reacted upon the film that contained it, probably doubling its box-office value. You will notice that it was the uninformed public which made this success for the music, and this can be ascribed to the fact that very few of the film critics really know anything about music. They are, understandably, afraid to criticize what they do not comprehend, and unless it is hammered into them, will pass over the music without any comment whatever. One well-known critic—a lady—in the course of slating 'The Great Mr. Handel' remarked that she supposed something *should* be said for a film that looked so pleasant and emitted such a pleasant sound. Another—a gentleman—complained, though not in print, that "Ombra mai fù" should be turned into a song. He had often heard it, he said, played as a violin or violoncello solo, during lunch, and liked it much better so. Many of them, however, quite honestly admit their ignorance of music.

A great many curious things happen to the sound between its reception by the microphone and its emission by the "loudspeaker". These are too technical for a general article of this kind, but a brief description in simple language will be found in the appendix by those who are interested and uninformed. There is no reason, though, why we should not follow the composer who has made a contract—through his agent if he is wise—with a film studio, to fit music to a dramatic picture. The film, approaching its final state, is shown to him in a small projection theatre at the studio, and a lively discussion probably ensues. It frequently happens that the director, producer and editor differ among themselves as to the quantity and kind of music that is required, while the composer's ideas, if he has an original mind, may differ from all three. If he is famous, he is probably busy; and he is always given by the impatient proprietors too little time for his work; so that wisdom tells him to suggest as little music as possible. On the other hand the producers, who begin by asking for a few hundred feet (film music, believe it or not, is measured by the foot!) continually expand their requirements, very often quite unnecessarily. It is not that they like music for music's sake, but that every time they see their opus, they find here and there weak passages which they think can be patched and bolstered by music. After a certain amount of oscillation, the composer's labour reaches stasis at about 2,500 to 3,000 feet—say half an hour's playing time.

Now a score that plays half an hour takes a long time to compose, especially as its style and form is dictated by the uncompromising shape of the "mute", which, disappointingly, does not include among its qualities that of mutability. So our composer sees it again, looks for

places where he can use the same piece of music twice, times with a stopwatch the "sequences" he has to "cover", and flies the studio and the metropolis, to cogitate, conceive and hatch out his scheme. While he is away the men with the scissors continually alter the mute, a most reprehensible procedure and very disconcerting to the musician, who finds his bars and phrases lopped in the most awkward places. He has no remedy: the mute is in the possession of the cutters, and they cannot keep their hands off it. Every now and then a score arrives at the studio and is handed out to the copyists by the studio music director, who as he receives the scores will check them, armed with metronome and stopwatch against the picture and telephone to the rusticated composer any important discrepancies he may find. At the same time he is "learning his picture" and preparing himself for the recording session which makes a menacing approach, doomsday-like, to the note-slave composing against clock and calendar.

Eventually all is completed. An orchestra of forty or fifty players is engaged and assembled on "the set" or in the recording theatre. Probably it will be the nucleus of the L.P.O. or the L.S.O., as there is an obvious advantage in having a combination that boasts an internal organization of its own and the *esprit de corps* that goes with a famous name. The players sit in tiers, as at a symphony concert, though the groups are more widely separated. Bright banks of light illumine the scene. There are four or five microphones on booms, stands and slings. At the side is a celluloid screen on to which the picture will be projected when called for by the conductor, moving at the immutable 90 ft. per minute.¹⁴ The conductor will rehearse the music, with the composer at hand to make corrections, suggestions, additions and cuts; and a musical assistant will be listening in the recording booth to the sound as it comes over the monitor¹⁵ from the floor. This sound, it should be said, differs from that heard by the conductor, and is in fact an index of what will go on to the film. When all has been tonally adjusted, the composer and the conductor will go into the booth, and the musical assistant will mount the rostrum, a procedure which generally leads to more adjustments of microphones and positions by the recordist and sound engineer. At some of these rehearsals the picture will be run, the music each time being brought a little nearer to synchronization, and if any instrumentalist is concerned in a special effect, it is explained to him, and he is shown the mute if necessary.

At last all is ready, and the final rehearsal is recorded upon a glass disc with acetate surface and played back to all concerned. The musicians hear their work, any necessary corrections are made and a "take" is announced. Now vanishes anything in the nature of experiment or improvisation, everyone is taut, concentrated and careful. This is where the value of a first-rate orchestra is shown: like a famous regiment going into action, they combine dash with experience and confidence with caution. Mistakes are often made; the conductor gets out of time with his picture, or in following it too intently gives an undecided or faulty beat; a player misses an entry, plays a wrong note or "breaks" a right one. Such mistakes are never regarded as blame-worthy; the conductor simply says "cut", and when the mute has been rewound, the shot is started again. It may have to be restarted five or six times; there are so many to be satisfied—the composer and conductor as to the music, the director as to the effects, the recordist as to the

¹⁴. This is the speed of the mute, not of the conductor.

¹⁵. Nothing to do with conscience or the Sixth Form. The recording booth is sound-proof, and the sound from the recording room (or floor) is conveyed to the recordist by a loud-speaker called a "monitor".

modulation of his "track" and the balance of the various microphones employed. When one is right another may be wrong, but patience is the order of the day, and sooner or later a take is obtained which satisfies all concerned.

All is not yet over. A "cover take" has to be made in case anything should happen to the negative in its passage through the laboratory. And so the day proceeds, ninety minutes recording, ten minutes for coffee, seventy minutes more, and then an hour for lunch. If things do not go smoothly—and there are many annoying things that may happen to film, sound-camera, microphones, amplifiers and projection machines which have nothing to do with the technicians or players—time may press hard at the end of the afternoon, and completion of the day's schedule may be in doubt. That is another occasion when the tried warrior is worth his weight in gold; speed without hurry, tension without excitement, mutual confidence and, above all, unflagging concentration have been known to work miracles against the clock. Next morning the protagonists hear their work when the "prints" come in from the laboratory. Comment is quite free, and no criticism is resented; but it is seldom nowadays that anything has to be remade, as manipulative surgery may serve to correct errors of incidence and timing. Gross mistakes of balance may be rectified mechanically by re-recording from the track, and small musical flaws, however annoying, are seldom of sufficient importance to call for drastic measures.

A word might be said here about what is called a "playback". When you see in a film a lady trilling on top B \flat , it may not be her voice you hear, and if it is you may be sure she did not sing it when she was photographed. The method usually employed is to record the singer's voice on film and disc in advance of the shooting date, under ordinary gramophonic conditions, and to play the record back to her when she is photographed. She moves her lips to fit what she hears, but she does not, necessarily, make any sound; if she does, it is not recorded. There are many advantages gained by this method: a lady does not always look her best when really trilling on top B \flat , and a microphone in the best acoustic position would appear in the picture, which would seldom be advisable.

When all the sound for a picture has been recorded, the various tracks, carrying respectively the music, dialogue and sound effects, are run synchronously with the mute through a re-recording panel, and the sound is mixed on to one track, a tedious and lengthy operation which generally proves a weariness of the flesh to all concerned. The track is printed on the margin of the mute, 19 frames¹⁶ in front of the picture to which it belongs (to allow for the distance between the "picture head" and the "sound head" in the projection machine), and henceforward runs in double harness with the mute, a bridal pair emancipated from their parents. One would think that our music had completely run the gauntlet, but there is a final hazard, an Apollyon bestriding the track, before the public is reached—those powerful and cunning wizards of finance—the "distributors", the organization that sells the picture to the exhibitors. If it approves, the picture is forthwith shown; but it may consider it too long, or take exception to particular incidents or sequences, and from the consequent rectification the music is very lucky if it escapes unscathed. It is essential to comply with the distributors' requirements, for when they have "accepted" the film they repay to the producing company a large part of the production cost which can

¹⁶ The little pictures which make up a film are called frames; there are sixteen of them to a foot, and so 1,440 of them pass through the projector every minute.

then be used to start a new film. Next it is shown in a West End house and eventually "released" for general exhibition. The word released should be read as applied to a stag before the hounds, and it would be a chastening experience for a composer to watch the reception of his work at the Astoria, Peckham Rye or the Lido, Hackney. The wise musician will avoid this humiliation and, having read the press notices, he will remember his opus only when he receives his half-yearly cheque from the Performing Right Society. That beneficent institution will insure him comfortably against sharing a tomb, as Mozart did, with forty-nine others; he will be able to sleep opulently in a marble casing, handing off oblivion with a nice, carved harp (single action) or trumpeting angels (at an angle of 90 degrees) over his name carved in deep intaglio.

Strangely enough this is another of the ways in which films are of benefit to good music. There would be no need nowadays for Schubert to die penniless¹⁷ or for Mozart to write begging letters. Three months in each year spent in writing film music would leave nine months to write such symphonies, concertos and chamber music as musical urge dictated; and all the discarded tunes, faulty fugues, second-class counterpoint and other waste ideas could be furbished up for use in films, their very flaws rendering them suitable for the less austere medium. Certain symphonic novelties which have recently appeared in the concert-room have been adversely criticized as "film music"—why not hand them over to Midas and set about better work? It is seldom that music can make a success on the concert platform and in the kinema. It has been done, but the amphibian would canter with more style if it were less well equipped for swimming. If it is good concert music it is essentially bad film music, and the converse is usually true. Nevertheless a good composer will write better music for a spy scene or the arrival of the fire-brigade than a bad one, if only he possesses the necessary dramatic instinct.

So, for the present, we must leave it, but not at all upon a despondent note. Public appreciation of good music has developed in an extraordinary manner during the last few years: its change of heart could almost be described as revolutionary. Film producers and directors are becoming interested in the genuine composer with modern ideas, and the distributors, who are inimical only to music they cannot sell, will give the Troxies, Astorias and Lidos good music if they show any sign of wanting it. The managers of kinemas have a litmus-like reaction to the opinion of their "customers", and commendation of artistic effort or mild deprecation of raucous or tasteless sound may produce cultural repercussion. Do not expect too much, though, of the manager: he is a salesman, and to him art is a sideline. And well-meant efforts to improve the music sometimes miscarry. A short time ago, in Manchester, a film was exhibited showing Handel directing, from the cembalo, the first performance of 'Messiah' at Covent Garden. Handel's original score (unaltered by Mozart, Costa or other improvers) was used, and for various reasons, the chief of which was an attempt to get great clarity in the vocal parts, the organ was not employed for the continuo. The focal manager and his organist, who were accustomed to hear "thundering diapasons", not to mention mixtures and pedal reeds, decided in consultation to rectify this deplorable weakness, and so in front of the maestro, his eyes wet with the emotion of the occasion, a refulgent "Wurlitzer" emerged from the depths and joined in with the Hallelujahs. It was not quite in tune or quite coincident in rhythm; but Handel showed no surprise, and King George II, on his feet for "King of Kings", did not even blink at the startling apparition.

¹⁷. Except the Income Tax.

The music critics can help, too, by noticing film music when its standard is higher than usual. The uncultured public is more likely to take notice of the music if the acknowledged local authority says it is worth while. The critics might lower their standard a little and realize that the film has to please a mixed audience with a non-musical majority. This means sometimes that familiar music must undergo transmutation and adaptation which may even throw a new light upon the work. One of our most erudite music critics, in a quite favourable notice of the Handelian film mentioned above, objected to the use of the harps with the great chorus "Worthy is the Lamb" in 'Messiah'. It is true that, so far as we know, Handel did not use harps; but St. John in the book of Revelation from which the words were "selected" by Jennens, distinctly stipulates for twenty-four elders *and four beasts*, all with harps! It is also true that the original chorus was "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands", which Handel, with all his love for grand and spectacular effect, could not hope to emulate. Criticism from the discriminating and informed, including adverse opinion, cannot but react to the benefit of film music; it is therefore not to be resented, or even to be merely endured, but should be welcomed, encouraged and prayed for. One could multiply instances of "no ears to hear", but the main thing is to get producers, managers, critics and the public to take an interest in film music and to recognize its importance to the psychological side of moving pictures. Eventually this will bring a higher standard and a freer use of music which will benefit alike makers, sellers, listeners, composers and, as a result, music itself.

Already there is a shaking of dry bones in the valley, and the submerged majority shows signs of getting its head above water. A wonderful renaissance is crowding the concert-rooms of London and the provinces, educating and enlightening more and more of the unsophisticated millions who are willing to add the luxury of hearing to those of the other senses, and it must eventually bring down the Plimsoll-mark in the cinemas and reduce the majority of the Philistines. Even case-armoured commercial leaders will give the public good music in films if the public demands it, and once the heaven reaches the souls of the uncultured millions that crowd our cinemas, who shall put a limit to its workings? The war will not always be with us and some day the material factors of life will shrink and recede, leaving a gap only to be filled by spiritual things. The artist, including the musician, will take his proper place in an enlightened nation and in humble imitation of the musical sunshine outside doubtless the scanning beam of the film-projector sound-head will spy improvement in "linked sweetness, long drawn out".

APPENDIX

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE METHOD FOR RECORDING SOUND UPON FILM

Sound produces pressure variations in the atmosphere which are propagated in the form of spherical waves of compression and rarefaction, and when intercepted by the microphone set up coincident fluctuation in the voltage of an electrical current. This electrical undulation, suitably magnified, gives rise to synchronal changes in the value of light, to which a moving, sensitized film is exposed. This film, when developed, constitutes the negative recording of the sound vibrations; from it a number of prints may be made.

In order to recover and project the sound which originally entered the microphone, a print is passed through the soundhead which ensures the passage of the film at the same speed at which the sound was recorded, keeping its velocity absolutely constant, past a source of light. This light passing through the film is

modulated by the recorded sound-track and directed upon the cathode of a photo-electric cell, resulting in a flow of electrons which is linear for the amount of light transmitted at any given moment. This electronic flow is amplified and acts upon the voice-coil of a loud-speaker which reproduces the original sound. (Extract from paper read to the Junior Institute of Engineers by Walter Harris November 19th 1937.)

There have been many developments in sound-film recording during the past six years, but the principle remains the same. The reader will be aware that the pitch of a sound depends upon the frequency of the vibrations and the timbre upon its harmonics or secondary frequencies. The microphone which collects the sound transmits a signal of small intensity; it is therefore necessary to pass it through an amplifier which magnifies the signal about 3,000,000 times and passes it on to a galvanometer.

In one of the R.C.A. (Radio Corporation of America) systems of recording this takes the form of a minute iron reed surrounded by a coil of wire which carries the voice-current. Modulated by this current the reed vibrates between the poles of a magnet, and the vibration is communicated to a tiny mirror which reflects a light beam on to what is called the exposure slit. Beneath this slit a sensitized film passes through the sound camera at 90 ft. per minute and on it, therefore, the modulations of the sound are delineated in black and white curved outlines which are continually changing in correspondence with the vibrations of the mirror. An indication of the movement of the galvanometer is thrown on a calibrated card in the sound camera, so that the recordist can see what is going on to the film and watch that his modulations do not exceed their prescribed living-room. There are many variations of this method. The Western Electric system for instance uses variable density instead of variable area, and other systems use variations in the slot and variations in the light. Many ingenious devices control what is called the "squeeze", which is a contrivance for eliminating background noises. These are continually changing and need not be explained here. They all depend finally upon the variation of light obstruction caused by modulations shown on the negative, the original sound vibrations having been now transmuted into visual form. The film is developed in the usual way and the sound-track is synchronized with the picture, film or mute. The appearance of the sound-track shows a most astonishing variety according to the pitch, quality and loudness of the photographed sound. The sound-track of my voice looks like a string of pearls, quite different, I may say, from its actual sound. Those who have seen 'Fantasia' will appreciate the queer forms the sound-track may take. In the reproduction of the sound the film is passed at the same speed, 90 ft. per minute, through the sound-head, and a fixed light shines through it on to a photo-electric cell which, as explained above, transmutes the modulations on the film into an electronic current which, amplified, acts on the loud-speaker voice-coil.

The precision of the modulations as photographed depends on what is called the grain of the film. Even the finest emulsion is still distinctly granular, and this becomes a critical factor when dealing with the minute exposures associated with very high frequencies, as obviously the recording of even the shortest and highest sounds requires a certain amount of time and space. The photographic quality of recording has been very greatly improved by the use of ultra-violet light. It has not by any means reached finality and is capable of improvement in many ways, some of which have been suggested in the foregoing article.

ON THE MAKING OF CONCERT PROGRAMMES:

A PERSONAL VIEW¹

BY GERALD M. COOPER

APART from a rather absurd but not unprofitable passion for catalogues, lists and card-indexes I have, I think, always been interested in the making of programmes. I must confess that I indulged in this odd vice long before I began to take any active part in concert-giving, but I think that what really brought the thing to a head was reading Plunket Greene's book on 'Interpretation in Song'. There was an artist! In his own medium he knew just how to build a programme so that every detail could make its maximum effect. And that is the secret. Some people seem to think that if you put enough good material together in any old higger-mugger way the values will sort themselves out, and the poor listener will enjoy what he likes and suffer the rest gladly. But what a hope! The ear is easily tired, and the all-too-human being is easily bored. I feel sometimes that I should like to have a word with a recording angel who could assess the percentage of boredom in a concert audience.

Why should one expect the unfortunate people who have bought their seats, hoping for the best, to work quite so hard and to suffer so much? To begin with, no ordinary listener can listen—really listen—to unfamiliar music for more than a limited space of time. One new full-size work is enough to put an end to most people's powers of concentration. If any man tells me that he can take in two and a half hours' worth of new stuff, I can only assume that he is either a genius or a liar.

Now let us be thoroughly pretentious for a moment. It is all a matter of curve—even worse, parabola. No, seriously—the ear of the audience must be courted, won, tested and finally caressed, if not tickled. And how often is this principle ignored! Think how often one has been led up the garden-path only to find that there is an acre of barren raspberry bushes to be ploughed through before you get to the summer-house.

What are the elements of a really good programme? Curve—parabola—is, as I have said, the backbone; but that is not all: period, tone-colour, volume, mood, length, all come into it.

It's no good saying that the bad composer belongs to his period and the good to all time. Of course, in a sense that is true enough. Nooody can pretend that the level of musical achievement has risen in the last two hundred years. Bach and Beethoven have still to be improved upon. But it *has* become more complex, and the language richer. Besides, as generation succeeds generation something happens to the receptiveness of the musical ear in general, so that music which sounded like the jungle in 1900 finds itself automatically debunked by 1940, and easy to listen to—even for the beginner, which is a little odd.

It won't do, then, to jazz about from Bach to Bax, then back again to Beethoven, with Stravinsky to pick up the pieces. I am convinced that in most cases it is best to stick to some kind of chronological sequence, but in doing so to be careful not to put the most difficult work at the

¹. These remarks apply to chamber concerts and recitals rather than to orchestral concerts.

end, when the listener's ear is already tired. Nor is it a good scheme to follow a new work with a classical masterpiece which will firmly and surely wipe out all trace of the impression made by the other. There is a little problem that is not always easy to solve.

Tone-colour and volume (number of players) are obviously dictated by £ s. d. It might be great fun to have a new combination for each work in the programme, but scarcely thrifty. The ear tires more quickly of wind and brass than of string tone, so if either of these is being used prominently more than once it is absolutely essential to separate the two episodes, if only by a solo piano. It is a good idea, too, to add to your palette as you go along rather than to take away from it. Once the ear has been stimulated by a new tone-colour it is a little depressing to have to go back to the same old drab. This applies also to numbers of players. A trio sounds decidedly thin after a sextet.

Contrast of mood is so obvious a necessity that it hardly needs discussion. It is fundamentally a matter of taste. It may be good to end gaily, and it may be even better to end on a tragic note. It all depends on the climax of your programme, the summer-house on the hill, to which you have been leading your audience. What lies beyond must balance the first half of the garden-path.

I doubt very much whether key-sequence greatly matters to any but those uncomfortable people who have perfect pitch. If the audience kept strictly silent from beginning to end it would be quite another matter, but chatter and applause break up the continuity so effectively that it is a question whether the ordinary listener would realize that a whole programme was in the same key, if he were not told.

Lastly, length of programme. How important that is only the poor victim knows. My personal view is that an hour and a quarter to an hour and a half is enough for a solo recital, an hour and a half to an hour and three quarters for a chamber-music programme and two hours for an orchestral concert. After that I want to go home—and go.

ARNE AND 'THE GUARDIAN OUTWITTED'

By P. C. ROSCOE

BURNEY says of Arne in his 'History of Music' that

the number of his unfortunate pieces for the stage was prodigious; yet none of them were condemned or neglected for want of merit in the Music, but words, of which the doctor was too frequently guilty of being the author.

AMONG these "unfortunate pieces" is one which perhaps does not deserve to be buried entirely in oblivion, and merits a passing glance, not so much for its own sake as for the sake of what its failure gave rise to. This piece is his comic opera, 'The Guardian Outwitted'. It was produced for the first time at Covent Garden on December 12th 1764, the 'Public Advertiser' for that date containing the following advertisement in its column of theatrical notices:

COVENT GARDEN

Never perform'd

AT THE

Theatre Royal in Covent Garden

This day will be produced a new comic opera call'd

THE GUARDIAN OUTWITTED.

The Principal Parts by

Mr. Beard
Mr. Shuter
Mr. Mattocks
Mr. Dyer

Mr. Squibb
Mr. Dunstall
Miss Hallam
Miss Miller

A young gentlewoman

(Being her first appearance on any stage)

And Miss Brent

The music composed by Doctor Arne.

End of Act I. A new comic dance called

The Tyroleze Peasants

By Monsieur Duquesnay, Miss Willford, etc.

Act II. A new grand ballet called

Rural Love

By Mr. Ficher, Sig. Manesiere, Miss Willford, Mr. Arnauld, Mr. Leppie,

Miss Twist, Miss Pitt, etc.

Books of the opera to be had at the theatre.

No money to be received at the stage-door.

Nor any money returned after the curtain is drawn up.

Places for the boxes to be taken of Mr. Sargant, at the stage-door.

To begin exactly at six o'clock. Vivant Rex & Regina.

The words as well as the music were in all probability written by Arne, though he was subsequently to deny their authorship. The book of the opera contained a preface in which Arne (I am assuming that he did actually write the words) explains that his principal inducement in writing it was "the scanty produce of original dramatic pieces", and further reveals that this is the fifth dramatic piece written by him. He ends by declaring that he has "devoted a life of study and labour to the rational amusement of the public, and is their most obedient and dutiful servant, the Author".

The various characters of the opera, and the actors taking the respective parts were as follows:

Sir Liquorish Trapgold	Mr. Shuter
Roger (a servant)	Mr. Dyer
Lord Planwell	Mr. Mattocks
Sir British Blunt	Mr. Beard
La Finesse	Mr. Squibb
Slouch (a servant)	Mr. Dunstall
Flirtilla (Sir L.'s ward)	Miss Brent
Lady Julia	Miss Hallam
Pinup (a ladies-maid)	Miss Miller
Maukin (a housemaid)	Miss Wainwright

(she being the young gentlewoman; a pupil of Arne's, who was making her first appearance on the stage).

The plot is succinctly summed up by Genest in his 'History of the Stage', as follows:

Lord Planwell, Sir Liquorish and La Finesse pay their addresses to Flirtilla—La Finesse pretends to be a French Marquis—Sir Liquorish is guardian to Flirtilla, he is supposed to have the power of keeping her out of her fortune till she is of age. Sir British furnishes Lord Planwell with the copy of a clause in the will made by Flirtilla's father—Roger is dressed up as Captain Spritely, who had witnessed the clause—Sir Liquorish is outwitted—he consents to Flirtilla's marriage with Lord Planwell. Sir British marries Lady Julia.

From the above outline the reader will soon perceive that the plot of the 'Guardian' bears a certain resemblance to that of a far better-known work: I mean of course 'The Barber of Seville'. This similarity,

however, is not due to any plagiarism on the part of Beaumarchais, who was most unlikely to have so much as even heard of the 'Guardian', but to the fact that both he and Arne had indirectly, and perhaps unconsciously, drawn upon the same source, namely the Italian *commedia dell'arte*, for their respective plots. The 'Guardian' was very probably directly inspired by a play of Goldoni's, who although an innovator and reformer, was deeply indebted to the methods of the *commedia*. In point of fact Arne, in his preface, is at pains to point out that only one episode in the opera is taken from Goldoni, but this only serves to make one suspect all the more the influence of the Italian upon the Englishman.

As to the plot of the 'Barber', this may be said to have descended to Beaumarchais from the *commedia* via Molière, who made use of it in 'École des Femmes', and Jean François Regnard, who did so in his 'Folies amoureuses'. In short, the 'Guardian' and the 'Barber' can perhaps be regarded as first cousins, each having the *commedia dell'arte* for grandfather, with Goldoni in the one case, Molière and Regnard in the other, for parents.

The first performance duly took place, and next morning the 'Public Advertiser' contained a notice which said:

The piece was honoured by the presence of a numerous and polite audience, to whom it gave great satisfaction. The parts were extremely well cast, and as well fitted by the performers, who did strict justice both to the Author and the Composer.

We cannot quit this subject without particularly paying the tribute of praise due to the performance of the new actress Miss Wainwright, who promises to be no small addition to our public entertainments.

So far, so good. But that evening the 'St. James' Chronicle' contained, in a column headed 'Poet's Corner', these lines:

To Doctor Arne; on the *Guardian Outwitted*.

To the Piece let the Title be fitted:

Dear Doctor, in this he o'er rul'd!

And instead of the *Guardian Outwitted*,

Pray call it the *Guardian Outfool'd*.

The tone of these lines is not precisely good-natured; neither is that of the letter which appeared in the same issue of the paper and which, in spite of the laudatory adjectives, seems to conceal a sting in its tail:

I was last night at the Opera, and cannot forbear congratulating you, and the Town on the expulsion of exotic Operas which may date their banishment from the birth of the *Guardian Outwitted*; the dialogue of which is *natural* and *pleasing*, the Burletta part *charming*, the Songs *enchanting*, the Dancing *transporting*, and the Music *heavenly*. If I found any fault in it, 'twas that of keeping my spirits in rapture for FOUR hours together.

I am yours, etc.,

THEATRICAL.

Lombard Street, Dec. 13.

The same paper in its next issue, published on December 15th, contained a letter purporting to refute the 'Advertiser's' report that the 'Guardian' had given satisfaction; suggesting that no representative of the 'Advertiser' could have been in the theatre that night, and ending by declaring "that it was the conjecture of the critics that Doctor Arne was the author of the drama, but had little or no hand in the composition of the music". The purpose of these remarks was, of course, generally to decry the whole opera, and it may have been these malicious words that gave rise to the theory that Arne was in fact the author as well as the composer.

Worse was to come. Two days later the 'Advertiser' published an indignant letter, signed "A Friend to Decency", violently attacking the unfortunate 'Guardian' on moral grounds:

I eagerly seize the opportunity of returning thanks to the unknown author for his kind suppression of the other four dramatic pieces which . . . he informs us he

has wrote, and it is to be hoped . . . that he will forthwith commit them to the flames . . . to me it seems much beneath all criticism, and throughout the whole the dialogue smells so strong of low life and Covent Garden [the modern equivalent would I suppose be Billingsgate], that it is impossible to read it without the utmost disgust.

The particular lines which excited Decency's Friend's disgust were those of a song sung by Roger the servant. Here they are:

The high and the low
Both equally know
How Venus could kindle desire ;
That Cupid her imp
Was an excellent pimp,
And ready to blow up the fire.

If now, at this pinch
The goddess should flinch,
And Cupid not watch at the door,
An ignorant jade,
She knows not her trade,
And he's a blind son of a whore.

Next day, however, someone (could it possibly have been Arne himself?) rushed to the defence of the 'Guardian' with another letter to the 'Advertiser', the gist of which was as follows:

. . . I offer my unfeigned thanks to a Gentleman who has lately obliged me and my friends with as agreeable an entertainment as the stage has afforded for some years past. It will scarce be necessary to say, that I mean Doctor Arne, and that the performance referred to is the *Guardian Outwitted*. The reception of this pleasing opera, or as I may call it, *Musical Comedy* . . . is highly in its favour. The audience seemed universally pleased ; their applause was loud, and scarce a single hiss except from one or two whom envy had turned into serpents . . . whether or no the words . . . are Doctor Arne's, I protest I am ignorant, but . . . if they be he has reason to be proud of avowing them . . . tho' not a first rate poet, yet he unites the sister arts of Music and Poetry in greater perfection than any musician either of this or any other age has done before him.

But this gallant attempt to save the opera failed, for that night, December 18th, it was given for the last time at Covent Garden,¹ the performance being for the benefit of the composer. Yet the papers had not done with this singularly unfortunate piece. On the very evening of its last performance the 'St. James' Chronicle' produced a new ballad, entitled 'Doctor Arne, occasioned by the *Guardian Outwitted*', which was reprinted in the 'Public Advertiser' next morning:

Doctor Arne, Doctor Arne,
It gives me *concarne*
To hear that in Nature's despite,
You have ta'en up the pen
Which your neighbours condemn
Because that *as how* you can't write.
Doctor Arne, Doctor Arne,
Because, &c.

The critics all *stares*,
And the authors they *swears*
It will ne'er go down with the *City*,
Though *Fizgig* and *B—k*
Will flatter the work,
And it sure would have pleased Mr. *Chitty*.

Four pieces you wrote,
No doubt worthy note
Which you cruelly ventured to smother,
And such is the age
We already presage
A very short life for the *other*.

¹ I say at Covent Garden because it is possible that it was performed at Dublin later. The words were certainly published there in 1766.

Now try Doctor Arne,
 This lesson to *learn*—
 Such efforts may chance to make you sick ;
 You can hit off a *song*,
 But to *write* you are *wrong*,
 So stick if you please to your music.

Not content with this, the same two papers, on December 23rd and 24th respectively, returned to the attack with some lines dedicated "To the Poets, on the union of Poetry and Musick. Exemplified in the Guardian Outwitted":

In vain, alas ! did Doctor Brown
 Amuse awhile the gaping town
 With Poetry and music :
 King David in the Cure of Saul²
 So hideously did squeak and squawl,
 It would have made a Jew sick.

But see at length both arts in one
 By great Apollo's favourite son
 Most happily united.
 How vastly fine the Fiddlers play !
 But list to what the actors say
 And you will be delighted !

Split up your goose-quills bards, or learn
 The sister arts from Doctor Arne,
 Go and compose sonatas ;
 Or soon, I'll hold you seven and six
 Tenducci, with old Fiddle-sticks
 Will scrawl his own Cantatas.

In spite, however, of its more than cool reception, Arne published the score of the 'Guardian', in an arrangement for harpsichord, that same year, and dedicated it to, of all people, the young Queen Charlotte. His dedicatory epistle, overflowing as it does with loyalty and gratitude, must not be overlooked:

Madam,

The author of the following composition, superlatively happy in the signal honour of inscribing it to your Majesty, with the lowest humility, lays it at your Royal Feet.

Nothing could moderate his joy on so fortunate an occasion, but the certainty that this production ; though finished with the utmost care, falls infinitely short of the high patronage to which it has aspired ; Yet however defective the work may appear to so discerning an eye, deign to accept the best atonement the author can possibly make, which is, the grateful sense he will ever retain of that exalted goodness, which condescended to accept the smallest atom of that Profound Duty with which he is Madam,

Your Majesty's

Most Honoured,

Most faithful,

And most obedient servant,

THOMAS AUGUSTINE ARNE.

With the coming of the New Year, and the supercession of the 'Guardian' at Covent Garden by other and more successful productions, it might be supposed that the subject would have been dropped by the journalists and other professional letters-off of squibs. But no: the most remarkable of them all was yet to come. This was published as a pamphlet early in 1765, by one W. Nicholl, of St. Pauls Church Yard, and consisted of nothing less than a full-length parody, entitled 'An Elegy on the Death of the Guardian Outwitted', of Gray's 'Elegy in a Country Churchyard'. Each page of the pamphlet was divided into an upper and a lower half, the upper half containing the parody, and the lower the equivalent verses of the original. The whole thing is so remarkable a production that I have set it out in full. Here it is:

² An oratorio, performed at Covent Garden in 1763.

i.

The shrill Bell rings the Knell of "Curtain Rise",
From the thrumm'd String the scraping Herd to warn,
Behind the Scenes the plodding Snuffer hies,
And leaves the Stage to Operas and to ARNE.

ii.

Now strike the glimmering Lamps upon the Sight,
And all the House a solemn Stillness holds,
Save where the Seaman from the Gallery's height
For roast Beef bawling, the cue'd Fiddler scolds.

iii.

Save in that yonder Velvet-mantled Box
A moping Countess to her Grace complains
Of Macaws, Monkeys, Parroquets, and Shocks,
And Losses *vaist*, and *vaistly* paltry gains.

iv.

Behind those rugged Spikes, that Bag-Wig's Shade,
Where tuneful Folios lie in many a heap
Each in his narrow Line for ever laid
The embryo Crotchets of the GUARDIAN sleep.

v.

The long, long Trill of Quaver-torturing *Brent* :
Miss *Hallam* twitt'ring from her tender Throat :
Thy Clarion, *Beard*, that Echo's ear has rent,
No more shall rouse each lowly-slumb'ring Note.

vi.

For thee no more a Parent's Breast shall burn,
His busy Fingers ply their Evening Care ;
Poor banish'd Children ! never to return,
Nor their own tender Sire's Applause to share.

vii.

Oft did the City Nymphs their Sweetness own,
Their Force the stubborn Centinel has broke.
How jocund did they drive the dull Farce down,
When Wit and Sense expir'd without a Joke.

viii.

Yet, let not Genius mock their useless Toil,
Their transient Honours, and their Life not long ;
Nor Sense behold with a disdainful Smile,
The short and simple Annals of a Song.

ix.

The Pomp of Tragedy, Expression's Pow'r,
And all that *Garrick*, all that *Quin* e'er gave ;
Have found alike th' inevitable hour,
And the fifth Act still led them to the Grave.

x.

Forgive, ye Bards, th' involuntary Fault,
If Love parental shall no Trophies raise,
Where in th' Orchestra's low-sequestered Vault
The Coxcomb Fiddler plies his Arm for Praise.

xi.

Can pensive ARNE, with animated Strain,
Back to its Audience call his fleeting Play ?
Can Music's Voice the Hand of Death restrain,
Or soothing Sounds prolong the fatal Day ?

xii.

Perhaps 'ere this he many an Opera made,
Which, though not pregnant with celestial Fire
Might yet, like this, Its little Night have sway'd,
And waked to ecstasy the living Lyre.

xiii.

But shrill Rehearsal each unprinted Page,
Lavish of Grins, and Squall, did ne'er unroll ;
The Hiss contemptuous, and the Catcall's Rage,
Repressed the great Ambition of his Soul.

xiv.

Full many a Book of purest Page serene,
The high, ungenial Cells of *Grub Street* bear ;
Full many a Pamphlet leaves the Press unseen,
In *Moorfields*, dangling to the desert Air.

xv.

Some Village ****, who a Wife's fell Frown,
A vixen Wife, with Music has withstood ;
Some blind *Corelli* oft may scrape unknown,
Some ARNE, not guilty of an Opera's Blood.

xvi.

Th' applause of listening Boxes to command,
Damnation's Pain and Ruin to despise ;
To scatter Crotchets o'er a fiddling Land
And read their Influence in a Lady's Eyes.

xvii.

Their Lot forbade, nor circumscrib'd alone
Their tuneful Empire, but their Pride confin'd,
Forbade pert Nonsense to usurp the Throne
Of Taste, and banish Genius from Mankind.

xviii.

Oft pilfer'd Airs, and borrowed Strains to hide,
To quench the Blushes of ingenuous Shame,
And feed the Fondness of a Fiddler's Pride
With dull Pretences to the Muse's Flame.

xix.

Far from the merry Wake, and rustic Ball,
No vain Pursuits their sober Wishes led ;
Along the Streets, and round His worship's Hall
They scrap'd the noisy Tenor for their Bread.

xx.

Yet still the Blind from Insult to protect,
Some faithful Consort ever wandering nigh
With vary'd Garb, and uncouth Pinner deck'd,
Implores the passing Tribute with a Sigh.

xxi.

Her Ditties oft, tho' an unlettered Muse,
The place of Air and Sonnet would supply ;
And Songs of Grace at *Christmas* would she chuse,
Repaid with Luncheons from the Grey-Goose Pye.

xxii.

For who so much to Gloominess a Prey,
Whose Spirits Music knows not to advance ?
Or who could listen to her Roundelay,
Nor lift one longing, lingering leg to dance ?

xxiii.

On some smart Air the active Heel relies,
Some sprightly Jig the springing Foot requires,
E'en to a March the moving Spirits rise,
E'en to a Minuet wake our youthful Fires.

xxiv.

For Thee, who mindful of th' unhonoured Dead,
Dost in these Lines the GUARDIAN's tale relate,
If chance, by Love of Elegy misled,
Some kindred Spirit shall enquire thy Fate.

xxv.

Haply some antiquated Maid may say,
 "Oft have we seen him at the Hour of Pray'r,
 Brushing, with hasty Hand the Dust away
 From his rent Cassock, and his Beaver bare."

xxvi.

"Oft by the side of yonder nodding Font
 That lifts its old fantastic Head so high,
 To wait the frequent Christ'ning was he wont,
 And frown upon the Clerk that babbled by."

xxvii.

"Oft in yon Pulpit, smiling as in Scorn,
 Muttering his uncouth Doctrines would he preach,
 Now drooping, woeful, wan, like one forlorn,
 In deep despair the Mitre's Grace to reach."

xxviii.

"One Morn I missed him at the Hour of Pray'r,
 In vain I took my Spectacles to see ;
 His wonted Surplice did another wear,
 Nor in the Vestry, nor the Desk was he."

xxix.

"The next, with Dirges due, and sad array,
 Slow thro' the Church-way Path we saw him brought,
 Approach and read, (if Thou canst read) the Lay,
 Which his own Clerk, his Parish Clerk, has wrote."

EPITAPH

"Here rests his Head upon the Lap of Earth
 A Curate poor, to Stalls and Tithes unknown ;
 No Bishop smil'd upon his humble Birth ;
 No Minister e'er mark'd him for his own.

"Bread was his only Food ; his Drink the Brook ;
 So small a salary did his Rector send ;
 He left his Laundress all he had, a Book ;
 He found in Death, 'twas all he wish'd, a Friend.

"No farther seek his Wardrobe to disclose,
 Nor draw his Breeches from their darksome Cell
 There, like their Master, let them find Repose,
 Nor dread the Horrors of a Taylor's Hell."

FINIS.

Who was the author of this remarkable achievement I have not been able to discover. The last verses seem to point to their having been written by a clerical gentleman, and seeing this I thought at first of the poet Churchill who had already attacked Arne in 'The Rosciad', and who was in orders. But unfortunately for my theory he died in November 1764, before the production of the 'Guardian'. So the question of authorship (like that of the 'Guardian' itself) remains something of a mystery.

One would have thought that the Elegy would have been sufficient to smother the 'Guardian' for all time, but it was not yet entirely dead, for in 1770 we find the overture being published by R. Bremner as No. 27 of his series of 'Periodical Overtures'. After this no more was heard of it except as a name appearing in lists of Arne's compositions, and W. H. Cummings in his biography of Arne, published in 1910, spoke of the music as being lost. This it is not, for the British Museum possesses two copies of the vocal score, as well as the orchestral parts of the overture. Readers of this article, however, need not rush to inspect them, for I can

assure the curious that the poor 'Guardian' alone is not worth a journey all the way to Bloomsbury and back, there being in my humble opinion only two songs of any merit in the whole opera. The contemporary critics were, I fear, right in their strictures, and it is a pity that the composer did not choose some other work of his for dedication to royalty!

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

The Notation of Polyphonic Music, 900-1600. By Willi Apel. (The Mediaeval Academy of America, Publication No. 38.) pp. xxv., 443, 18. (Mediaeval Academy of America, Cambridge, Mass., 1942.) \$4.50.

I cannot recall whether musical notation was one of the many subjects on which Sherlock Holmes proposed to write monographs in his retirement. If it was, he would have been well employed. The musician who accepts any modern transcription with unquestioning trust and does no more than glance at an occasional facsimile has no idea of the problems which editors have to face nor, for that matter, of the mistakes which they have made in the past. The mistakes have not been unprofitable. Knowledge has grown by constant experiment; theory has been verified by practice; changes have been codified and obscurities made clear. The result of all this is that the student to-day, provided he knows where to look for information, is better equipped than the pioneer scholars of the last century. But while the study of musical notation has become more and more an exact science, there has been no adequate book on the subject in English. Students have had to rely on Johannes Wolf, and even Wolf, as time has shown, is not infallible. The value of Dr. Apel's book is not merely that it meets the needs of English students (who for all that ought to know sufficient German to be able to read books about music) but also that it is up-to-date, critical and clear. Perhaps the last of these qualities should have been put first. Anyone who has waded through technical literature on this subject knows to what depths of obscurity the most well-intentioned authors can sink. There is not a sentence in Dr. Apel's book which is not perfectly clear at a first reading. He knows exactly what he wants to say, and says it without fumbling. He guesses in advance what explanations the reader will require and presents them as naturally as if he had been writing English all his life. No flowers of speech, not an unnecessary word; and since there is always enthusiasm, no tedium.

The method is not strictly historical. The book begins with keyboard music and tablatures, goes on to the white notation of the later polyphonic music and ends with a study of the earlier black notation. The last, which is extremely detailed, occupies more than half the volume. The result of this method is that there is not at first sight a clear picture of the development of notation as a system; but it is justified by the author's purpose, which is to introduce students to the subject by degrees, proceeding from the known to the unknown. This is a severely practical book. It is meant to train scholars, to provide them with part of the essential equipment of their craft. Hence it is concerned primarily not with theoretical writers, though their evidence is naturally drawn upon, but with actual examples of old music and the particular problems they present. This is a grammar of notation, complete with exercises for transcription. Every exercise is a page of an actual manuscript, printed in facsimile. Partial transcriptions are printed in an appendix, but the real work is to be done, as it should be, by the student. It would be difficult to imagine a better preparation for editing and studying the music of this period. When the student has worked through this book he can start transcribing the examples in Wolf's 'Musikalische Schrifttafeln', which, it must be admitted, he will find rather less fatiguing to his eyes than the present facsimiles.



One of the most important advances in transcription made in recent years has been the adoption of the crotchet as the unit. Everyone knows the forbidding appearance of the pages of older publications, e.g. Wooldridge's volumes on the polyphonic period, with their masses of semibreves and minims. Dr. Apel quite rightly points out that the use of the crotchet as the unit is not merely a matter of appeal to the eye, though that is important, but also vitally affects the tempo; and he argues with good reason that tempo is not merely a matter for the interpreter but was regulated in the past by well-established conventions, to which the notation supplies the clue. Another important detail on which earlier scholars went astray is the sub-division of the breve in pre-Franconian notation. It used to be assumed that ternary subdivision applied here as in the later period, but modern editors have inclined more and more to the opinion that such an assumption is arbitrary. Dr. Apel sums up very well the arguments for regarding a binary subdivision of the breve as proper to this period. He adduces as evidence the name *semibrevis* (i.e. half a breve) and concludes that "if this view is accepted, Franco of Cologne's reiterated statement demanding the ternary division of the *B* would represent, not a confirmation

of a traditional practice, but a deliberate deviation from it". It follows that a group of three semibreves will be written not as a triplet but as the equivalent of two minims and a semibreve in the *tempus imperfectum* of later notation. When it comes to the multiple semibreve groups of Petrus de Cruce (whom Dr. Apel will not allow to be called Pierre de la Croix) it is obvious, as he says, that if the music is sung at the proper speed "no differentiations of temporal values are possible". The labour which editors have sometimes expended on what they considered exact transcriptions of such groups has been in vain because they never took the tempo into account.

Dr. Apel's account of polyphonic notation is so admirable that it is a pity he has not also dealt with the monodic compositions of the Middle Ages. We have to be content with a single allusion to the principles currently accepted for the transcription of troubadour melodies. It is true that this subject has been very fully dealt with by Wolf in the 'Handbuch der Notationskunde', but it would have been interesting to have Dr. Apel's account, both for the sake of completeness and because we may be quite certain he has ideas of his own about it. The only positive omission in this book is an account of the accidentals and their use. Occasional reference is made to the principles of *musica ficta*, on which Dr. Apel's very sensible views are well-known from his 'Accidentien und Tonalität in den Musikdenkmälern des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts', but the signs for chromatic alteration are nowhere systematically discussed. Dr. Apel, by the way, is not entirely consistent in his treatment of *musica ficta*. In his discussion of Dufay's 'Dona pudenti' (Oxford, *Canonici misc.* 213) on p. 102 he declares that it "does not need any emendations, as far as the accidentals are concerned". Yet in his transcription of the opening bars he adds B \flat three times to the *discantus*. The transcription seems to illustrate a note on p. 104, which sets out the principles which Dr. Apel considers valid for the addition of B \flat where there is none in the signature; but this note is concerned with an entirely different work—the *Sanctus* of a Mass by Benet.

It is hardly possible to ensure perfect accuracy in a work dealing with a large number of examples. I cite one or two slips which have caught my eye, not for the sake of censure but as a contribution to a second edition:

- p. 100, l. 18. For "*maximodus perfectus*" read "*maximodus imperfectus*."
- p. 108, ex. 3, l. 2. The first note of the transcription should be a minim.
- p. 127. In the ex. from Cipriano de Rore the bass seems to have got one bar ahead of the other parts.
- p. 172, l. 21. For "No. 25" read "No. 24".
- p. 278. The word "on" is missing after "doit" in the first line of the ex.
- p. 319, ex., l. 1, bar 5. The second and third beats should be G E, not E C.
- p. 324, l. 1. For "No. 46" read "No. 45".
- p. 397, ex. 2. Either the ligatures are displaced or the transcription is faulty.
- App. No. 23. The second part requires an "8" under the clef.

App. No. 27, third voice, bar 2. For  read 

J. A. W.

The Violin Concerto: a Study in German Romanticism. By Benjamin F. Swalin. pp. 172. (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, U.S.A.; Milford, London, 1941.) 21s. 6d.

This book on the violin concerto in Germany from Spohr to Brahms (say, from 1802 to 1879) makes one more to be added to a list of half a dozen given under "Concerto" in the supplementary volume of Grove (1940). Another half dozen titles may be gleaned from a bibliography of some eighty names at the end of the book. There is one book, however, which will leap to the mind of any English musician, though it is, oddly, not included in either list: Tovey's 'Essays in Musical Analysis', Vol. iii, 'Concertos'. Some would say that this is not only the best thing written on the musical aspect of this form of music, but the best that Tovey wrote at all; for he was a good deal more than a mere writer of books, and it was chance rather than plan that brought together the articles it contains.

Mr. Swalin's topic is, however, not concertos in general, not for this instrument or that, nor of classical or modern, nor of Europe at large, but concertos for violin in a limited period and style and in one country. His book is none the worse for being narrowly confined in subject: we have quite enough nebulous lucubrations on music written for those who "love it, but don't know a thing about it". This one is written for those who not only love it but make it, and who begin to hope that they will soon make it well and be able to value violin music as the literature it really is.

Singers have sometimes grumbled that Brahms's songs are "pieces" for clarinet and piano. They remind us that the concerto is an instrumental "song". Mozart, who at the age of twenty delivered to mankind the sealed pattern of the violin concerto, wrote for all the wood-wind in turn, as well as for harp and horn and triumphantly for clavier. Bach utilized (first "Brandenburg") the tenuous kit, and Beethoven found (fifth piano

Concerto) a corner for the inarticulate drums ; in like manner Liszt (first piano Concerto) gratified the triangle, and Ravel ('Introduction et Allegro') comforted the harp by giving it the remaining notes of the scale that the other instruments had omitted in the chord. True, these last are only "soli", but the principle is the same of matching weak impetus against strong momentum, or line against colour, or agile skill against tough weight. All the strings do this well; best, the violin, of which also the ear least tires.

For this book the concerto begins with Spohr and Paganini, who were of the same age but as different in character as their recorded virtuosity, their surviving works and their portraits (in Grove) would suggest—Spohr insisting on noble tone and gracious proportions, but content with a bit of blunted melody and hoping that his chromatics would give it an edge, and at any rate disdaining the fireworks with which Paganini set the world ablaze ; Paganini meaning business with them, capturing minds and hearts by his novel ideas and quick wit, but with those hair-trigger nerves of his wearing out his life sixteen years earlier. The two types seem to live again in Joachim's greater power and Sarasate's lesser passion (and again the nervous player dies sixteen years sooner), and to be in a sense the antitypes of F. David and Ernst—David who, like Joachim, revived the works of his great predecessors and helped Mendelssohn's Concerto, by word and deed, as Joachim Brahms's ; and Ernst who conceived bravura he could not always play himself and whose fiery style cost him, as against David, perhaps twelve years of life.

Joachim's fame as a composer hangs on his D minor Concerto of which the first movement is as long as Beethoven's and the finale even longer than Tchaikovsky's. It has not the glorious breadth of the one nor the plentiful and indisputable melodies of the other, but the bravura is always germane and the Magyar feeling sincerer and honester than those Hungarian elements, often quoted on the strength solely of the titles, of Haydn's first Trio, Brahms's Op. 21, Berlioz's Rakoczy march, and of others who did for such elements no more than Beethoven for Scots folksong. Bruch's fame rests similarly on his irresistible G minor—perhaps we shall be allowed some day to test this verdict by hearing his two D minors ; it was sketched, we are told, in 1857, performed in 1866, revised (possibly by Joachim) and published 1868. He has an infallible ear for a tune, like Stanford, and they both a little overwrote themselves. Joachim and Bruch fill the gap between Mendelssohn's E minor and Brahms's A major, both fully analysed here.

The author has been lavish with his music quotations at the rate of three to two pages, and not a few of them unabbreviated extracts from the full score: they are worth the enhanced cost of the book. I have noticed no misprints in them, though with the cramped leger lines, close-packed marks of performance and blotchy paper that is not a matter to take an affidavit on; the bars also are numbered. Both of these are rare merits. The style of writing is lucid and compact, even if some queer uses of words ("dynamic", p. 69, "derogatory", p. 55, "assumed", p. 94) leave the meaning now and then in doubt. The dates and the technical information will be of value to violinists. The musical judgments are sound in the main, but on p. 86 there is a startling suggestion of delaying Joachim's *sf* to the bar accent, a procedure which would ruin the subsequent phrasing.

The "Romantic" of the title is not explained ; indeed, that word seldom is, it is so useful as a wizard's wand for turning a humdrum idea into a spiritual adventure. The numerous witnesses called on p. 145 to kiss the book are too conflicting to be of use. "I know what it means if you don't ask me", said a wise tongue.

A. H. F. S.

Three Centuries of American Hymnody. By Henry Wilder Foote. pp. 418. (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. ; Milford, London, 1940.) 22s. 6d.

At a time when the Americans are bound closely to us in the common task this contribution to hymnology is very welcome. It is comprehensive, copious footnotes and quotations illustrate the development of style and form, it is not without humour and is also of considerable psychological interest. It is, however, a matter for regret that no hymn-tunes are given. Some examples of "fuguing" and other curiosities of musical composition would be particularly interesting. The omission of metrical psalm tunes common to both sides of the Atlantic is not so tiresome, since they have been discussed at length by Dr. Frere in his masterly Introduction to the historical edition of 'Hymns Ancient and Modern'.

Though on first cutting the pages one may be attracted by the ballad of Wicked Polly or the following verse:

Why should our garments (made to hide
Our parents' shame) provoke our pride ?
The art of dress did ne'er begin
Till Eve our mother learned to sin

it would be a mistake to regard the book either as a collection of potted biographies of hymn-writers or as an anthology of humorous verse.

My first reaction was to find Eric Gill's book, 'Clothes', and to read his chapter on 'Dignity and Decency and the Tyranny of Tailors' before hastily looking to see what

Dr. Foote says about Sankey, Moody and Bliss, whose songs and solos were such a popular success in England. He is critical, stating that their claim to originality cannot be sustained since folk-hymns of similar type go back as far as the eighteenth century. It is rather shocking to read that 50,000,000 copies of Sankey's books were sold, bringing handsome profits to the publisher, and no less distressing to see a note on Fanny Crosby, credited with 8,000 compositions, who was under contract to furnish her publishers with three songs a week. However, Dr. Foote points out that only a profound ignorance of accepted standards could have led admirers to describe her (in 1905) as the greatest living writer of hymns.

So much for what might be described as the musical expression of a religion of general outlet. It was, unless my memory is at fault, Harry Graham who wrote in 'Ruthless Rhymes':

Aunt Jane observed, the second time
She tumbled off a bus,
The step is short from the Sublime
To the Ridiculous.

Some of Dr. Foote's examples are ruthless too, especially those taken from the old hymns "calculated to impart fear to the sinful" by vivid portrayal of the prospect of death and the wrath to come.

She [w]rung her hands and groaned and cried
And gnawed her tongue before she died,
Her nails turned black, her voice did fail,
She died and left this lower vale.

Reference to 'The Stuffed Owl' shows how Julia Moore, the Sweet Singer of Michigan, carried the tradition on into the late nineteenth century, singing of violent death. She was, however, quite sure that "P. P. Bliss went home above", where we may safely leave him before going on to discuss the more serious aspects of American hymnody.

In the first place we may briefly note another curiosity, Mather's 'Psalterium Americanum'. Mather, in order that it might be possible to sing any psalm to any tune in either long or common metre, made use of a device which will easily be understood from the following example:

Yes, when I shall walk in the Vale
Of the dark [dismal] shade of Death.

A useful trick, perhaps, but not a very poetical one. It would not be unjust to say that the authors of our own Old Version and the thirty ministers who began work on the Bay Psalm Book in 1636 because they thought the O.V. not close enough to the original text all put piety and a faithful translation before poetry. But, possibly, Dr. Foote's statement with regard to the O.V., that "perhaps it was as good as could have been written in England at that time" contains too large an assumption if he means that there were no men able to write poetry then. Sir Philip Sydney, Sir David Lindsay, William Hunnis and George Gascoigne had all written sacred verse, and Sir Thomas Wyatt (d. 1542) was a poet of no slight merit.

Eventually, it appears, the writings of Pope and Addison began to influence thought in New England, and by 1730 Mather Byles, looking back to 1630, could write:

Solid, and grave, and plain the Country stood,
Inelegant, and rigorously good.

Dr. Foote's studies make it quite clear that there had been a general decline in the quality of singing in the English-speaking colonies. The colonists rapidly lost touch with such culture as their ancestors had carried from Elizabethan England. Reasons for this unfortunate state of affairs are given; but was a low level of musical culture really inevitable? Possibly, had the influence of Moravian settlers in Pennsylvania, maintaining a lively interest in music and in performance, been felt outside their own borders, the popular hymns of "the mid-century floodtide" might have been on a musical level comparable with the literary merit of Whittier's poems which now began to influence the compilers of hymnals. It appears, from the examples given, that American hymn writers tended more and more to lose sight of the doctrinal element which we in England, more recently influenced by the Latin Office Hymns, have been inclined to stress. Parallel with the vogue of Whittier (himself always associated with the "silent meetings" of Friends; the hymns attributed to him are in the main extracts from his poems) there was a strong Unitarian influence and a considerable emphasis on ideas of freedom, reform and social service. Many people here hold the view that verses on these themes, however well adapted for singing, are not really "hymns". By the twentieth century, denominational influences appear to have diminished almost to vanishing point, the flood of crudely emotional "Gospel Songs" had abated and the long struggle between the adherents of a high standard of hymnody and "camp meeting songs", which has marked the history of American Methodism, seemed to have been decided in favour of the more enlightened point of view. It would appear, though, that hymns which advancing standards of taste would normally reject here, are deliberately retained over there.

In a note on Negro spirituals Dr. Foote makes the point that they are really not suited to white people, who seldom sing them well—an opinion which will probably be shared by most musicians.

We have here, then, given with a fair amount of detail, a picture of what might be called the middle path between the brimstone and treacle school of hymnody and the sacramental school. The path appears to lead to a preoccupation with those social aspects of the Gospel which have come to take a more important place in some recent English hymn-books. As a contribution to colonial history the book is extremely interesting, and though perhaps musicians may feel that music is mentioned only incidentally, it may possibly be considered not too fantastic to suggest that even musicians might occasionally consider words as well as tunes when discussing the vexed question of congregational singing.

A. T. S.

Challenges: a Series of Controversial Essays on Music. By Ralph Hill. With an Introduction by John Ireland and an Envoi by C. B. Rees. p. 104. (Joseph Williams, London, 1943.) 4s.

No better title could have been devised for this series of eleven essays of varying length and substance. For challenges they are, every one of them—challenges to our current notions of musical criticism, nationalism, the merits and demerits of folksong in art-music, the ordinary music lover and his attitude to the new music, and a number of other issues which by their very nature lend themselves to controversy and argument. The Music Editor of 'The Radio Times' loves controversy, he thrives on statements likely to arouse most violent reactions which I, for one, consider part of the attraction of these essays. Hill hits out left and right, yet at times a trifle too hard and not always aiming at the true foe. There are a number of points in these essays on which one would like to cross swords with this musical Savonarola, particularly on the vexed question of the intrinsic value or otherwise of folksong as a fertilizing element in a composer's personal style.

Yet what gives these essays their mark is, in addition to a lively and amusing pen—nothing is more entertaining than the rare spectacle of critics turning, for once, against each other—the sincerity and forthright directness with which these essays are written. Whether you agree or not with Hill, you feel that music is a vital thing to him, a thing that should form an essential part of our intellectual life, and not be just a purely professional matter to musicians, nor a source of merely casual and superficial enjoyment to the layman. With this every true musician will agree whole-heartedly. In John Ireland and C. B. Rees, who have contributed with an Introduction and Envoi, respectively, the author has found critical yet sympathetic supporters of his cause.

M. C.

REVIEWS OF MUSIC

Alwyn, William, *Divertimento* for solo flute. (Boosey & Hawkes, London.) 3s.

Pieces for unaccompanied wind instruments have usually a purely technical appeal and, by their very nature, can seldom sustain interest as concert music. Mr. Alwyn's clever score is by way of being an exception. At any rate, such was the impression created at its first public performance last year. Mr. Alwyn uses the various devices peculiar to the flute, not to display flute technique, but to serve the demands of certain forms which one would hardly have thought possible of execution by an unaccompanied wind instrument. The first movement, for instance, of this *Divertimento* is an 'Introduction and Fughetta' giving a complete illusion of real part-writing. To make the procedures clear, the music is set out on two staves. A set of 'Variations on a Ground' follows in which, among a variety of unusual devices, the theme in the bass register is amplified by arpeggio chords while the higher register is still available for an illusion of counterpoint. This is actually an ingenious adaptation of the technique of the violin cadenza. Indeed, the effect produced in performance is such that at times it is difficult to believe that the flautist has not evolved some trick equivalent to double stopping.

E. L.

Bach, *Organ Prelude and Fugue in E♭ major (St. Anne)*, arranged for two Pianos, four Hands, by Christopher Le Fleming. (Chester, London.) 10s.

This most effective arrangement of Bach's great fugue will be a welcome addition to the growing repertory of works for two pianos. The parts are distributed between the two instruments without any attempt to delude or embroider, except at the very end where an extra bar is legitimately inserted for concert purposes. The arrangement is a painstaking piece of work deserving of success.

E. L.

Bernard, Anthony, *When that I was and a little tiny boy* (Shakespeare), for Medium Voice and Piano. (Chester, London.) 2s.

Mr. Bernard must be one of the most daring of modern composers. He has set the clown's epilogue from 'Twelfth Night' to a tune that comes as near the traditional one as makes no odds, and his mildly chromatic harmony might just as well have been used to enhance that. But the proof of a song is in the singing, and one has found at Stratford-on-Avon that this one makes its effect. The tune is right, and good in itself, while the harmony is subtle without being sophisticated. E. B.

Branson, David, *The Flung Spray* for Piano. (Oxford University Press.) 3s.

The epithet "interesting" has been very much overworked of late, especially in the lobbies of concert halls. Any music is interesting which fails to convince at a first hearing. This music, however, is more genuinely interesting. The harmonies do not always signify, the melodies tend to get lost in their own complications, but at bottom there is a core of vitality in this piece which should not be overlooked. E. L.

Britten, Benjamin, *Folksong Arrangements* for Voice and Piano. Vol. I. *British Isles*. (Boosey & Hawkes, London.) 5s.

It takes a composer of Mr. Britten's natural talent and facility to write folksong arrangements that will be artistic and at the same time remain faithful to the original. Even he, in the last two of this set, 'The Ash Grove' and 'Oliver Cromwell', cannot refrain from indulging in fanciful accompaniments which, however witty they may appear, will hardly be acceptable in the nursery. 'O can ye sew cushions' and 'The trees they grow so high' are, however, models of delicate arrangement that will appeal to both amateur and connoisseur. 'The Bonny Earl o' Moray' is bolstered up with a sly dissonance or two, but the most immediately pleasing will surely be 'The Sally Gardens,' for which the words in this version have been taken from W. B. Yeats. E. L.

Britten, Benjamin, *Mazurka elegiaca* (in memoriam I. J. Paderewski) for two Pianos, four Hands. (Boosey & Hawkes, London.) 6s. 3d.

There are no notes to spare in Mr. Britten's music. The three sections of this sombre Mazurka make their appeal bluntly and boldly and show the composer's remarkable capacity for judging just how his score is going to tell in the concert hall. He has no use for elaborate detail, nor does he burden the performer with technicalities which the listener can seldom be expected to grasp. Debussy used to say of his Preludes that they should be played *entre quat'z yeux*; and for a long time this held true. Mr. Britten's music is at the other extreme. Here everything is sharply exteriorized. He writes not so much for the performer's delectation as for the listener's enjoyment. E. L.

Dyson, George, *Concerto* for Violin and Orchestra. (Novello, London.) Piano Score with Solo Part, 12s. 6d.

The difficulty many people seem to have with Sir George Dyson's music is that it seems to them to be a synthesis of things, good in themselves, which somehow refuses to shape itself into one single creative phenomenon. It is, they hold, a very clever and discerning application of styles rather than a matter of style. These good people—or bad, according to the point of view—will doubtless say that the new violin Concerto once again supports their view; but whether one agrees with them or not, one hopes they would admit that this work, whatever its lack of individuality, is fascinating and immaculately turned-out music, and that, while it comes nowhere near Beethoven, Brahms and Elgar, it is in the neighbourhood of Mendelssohn and Dvořák, leaving Bruch, Saint-Saëns, Glazunov and the rest of the fiddling entertainments next to nowhere. And, to be sure, the violinist's repertory of concertos is not so rich in middle-rank works in which both player and listener can take pleasure that they can afford to ignore such a gift as this. They may possibly say that the Concerto lacks the kind of tune over which the violin is tempted to sing its heart out; but they will not escape the charge of prejudice if they fail to admit that the solo part is ideally written for them—there is even a bit of Kreisler, if they must have that, in the middle of the slow movement—and that it is inlaid into the orchestral texture with infallible skill. E. B.

Folksongs from China for Voice and Piano. Collected by Tz-Zeung Koo; arranged by Reginald Redman; edited by Maurice Jacobson; English words by Irene Gass and Arthur Waley. (Curwen, London.) 3s. 6d.

Most of these tunes were collected by Dr. Koo, who has the reputation of being the Cecil Sharp of China. Two of them, 'The Chinese National Anthem' and the 'March of the Volunteers', are quite modern. 'The Hunchbacky Man' is based on a poem of the Sung Dynasty, and the remaining seven consist of a lullaby, a nursery rhyme, a lament and songs of liberty, patriotism and disappointed love. Some of the texts are translations from the Chinese, others are poems specially written for this edition. Both are adequately conceived for school use or amateur choirs. Mr. Redman's harmonizations make appropriate use of consecutive fifths and the pentatonic scale. E. L.

Fulton, Norman, *The Cakewalk* (Wilfred Wilson Gibson), Song for Baritone and Piano, 2s. 6d.; *The Willow Song* (Shakespeare), for Medium Voice and Piano, 2s.; *Two Songs from 'Twelfth Night'* (Shakespeare): 1. *Come away, Death.* 2. *O mistress mine,* for Medium Voice and Piano, 3s.; *Two Songs of Thomas Lodge*, for Medium Voice and Piano, 3s. (Oxford University Press.)

There is no very rich invention here: one rather feels that the composer works by careful stages, perhaps at the piano, and a song may turn in his hands into something he had not quite clearly foreseen from the start. But he writes pleasantly and has a way of taking rhythm into his own hands without spoiling the poet's metre, and of varying the length, shape and pace of his phrases quite cunningly. Thus he can make something new even out of the very familiar and frequently composed Shakespeare poems of his choice, without showing any great originality in melody or harmony.

E. B.

Gundry, Inglis, *Five Bells: A Naval Suite* for Chorus and Orchestra. (Hinrichsen, London.) Vocal Score, 3s.

Dedicated to the composer's shipmates of H.M.S. *Welshman*, this work purports to give a musical picture of life at sea. The "five bells" introduce the first movement based on the bugle call used for Reveille, the text consisting of repeatable sayings of sailors at that hour of the morning. The second movement makes use of the Muster Call, the third of the Bosun's Call, while in the 'Lyrical Interlude' and 'Finale' the composer sets to music some of the actual commands used at sea.

E. L.

Hall, Richard, *Toccata, Intermezzo and Fugue* for Organ. (Hinrichsen, London.) 3s.

Mr. Hall's counterpoint, conceived in the distorted Bach style, is not always resourceful. Imitations do not seem to be part of his technique, and episodes and *stretti* are used less often than dry successions and chromatic effects. The most successful sections are the Intermezzo, a logical little structure, and the brilliant Toccata. The Fugue suffers from being too short and undeveloped, and it lacks, too, that dignity of sentiment which, in an organ work of these dimensions, it is hard to replace.

E. L.

Harmonices Musices Odhecaton A. Edited by Helen Hewitt. Edition of the Literary Texts by Isabel Pope. pp. 421; pl. 5. (The Mediaeval Academy of America, Cambridge, Mass., 1942.) \$4.00.

Two things, themselves unrelated, but destined to be closely connected in their practical value, enriched life towards the end of the Middle Ages—the art of printing and the perfection of choral polyphony. As early as 1501 a carefully selected and carefully printed anthology of the secular music of Burgundian and Flemish composers was issued from the press of Ottaviano dei Petrucci at Venice. This is the work known as the 'Odhecaton'—in full, 'Harmonices Musices Odhecaton A', that is to say "A Hundred Part-Songs, First Series"—to be followed in due course by 'Canti B', fifty more, in the next year; and in 1504 by 'Canti C', a hundred and fifty by title, but actually only 139. 'Odhecaton' and its companion volumes are printed in separate voice-parts, two on each page of the opening in the case of the four-part songs, and similarly for the three and five-part compositions; and though available since 1932 in a facsimile edition, the manner of its printing, not to speak of ligatures and other relics of medieval notation now obsolete, makes an edition in modern notation most desirable and highly welcome.

Dr. Hewitt has now given us this edition, complete with all the exhaustive analyses and concordances in which the musicological soul delights, and without which no real progress in the science of musical history can be made. For those of more common clay, mere musicians, there is also a feast of good things. Many writers of the so-called "Netherlands Schools" are not only illustrious in their own day, but also in ours. Josquin des Prés and Dufay are becoming as well known to us as were Palestrina and Lassus to our grandfathers; and here we meet also, and may evaluate almost for the first time, the work of some of the minor composers of these groups—Agricola, Compère, Hayne, Japart. Dunstable and Dufay are not represented, and perhaps they were already considered archaic in 1501.

It was fashionable in those days for composers to take some existing work and to add an extra part or parts. Bedingham's Concordances upon 'O rosa bella' in the Trient Codices is the outstanding example of this practice. Many such are to be found in the 'Odhecaton', and there is some piquancy in the fact that both Pope Leo the Tenth and King Henry VIII tried their hands at it (Odh. Nos. 61, 90; Hewitt, Concordance, pp. 157, 166).

The work is very well edited, and the music has bar-lines between, not through, the staves; a very satisfactory method. Except for the last page, 421, the printing is good and the volume pleasantly readable, for Miss Hewitt has succeeded in writing in such a way as to make recondite and highly technical questions interesting and intelligible to the lay mind.

A. H.

Jarecki, Tadeusz, *Trio: Fugato ed Aria* for Piano, Violin and Cello (or Viola). (Chester, London.) 7s. 6d.

The terms "fugato" and "aria" are used here only in a loose sense: they are not meant to denote an extensive use of counterpoint nor an instrumental aria on a broad scale. Actually, the work is a single movement in ternary form, the aria being a short lyrical section sandwiched between two allegros. Written before the last war, it displays a romantic exuberance characteristic of the period. E. L.

Le Fleming, Christopher, *If it's ever spring again* (Thomas Hardy), for Medium Voice and Piano. (Chester, London.) 2s.

If one looks for some astringency in a Hardy setting, one may easily find this song rather too sweet, and the composer risks some metrical monotony by letting all his lines end on a long note on downbeats. But there is sincerity and beauty and some atmosphere about this treatment of a very singable poem that seems to have tempted only one composer before (Robin Milford). E. B.

Milford, Robin, *Littlejoy*, for Piano (*The Oxford Piano Series*, edited by A. Forbes Milne, Grade C.D.) (Oxford University Press.) 2s. 6d.

The composer says in a note that these five little pieces may be played separately or in conjunction with his cycle of children's songs, 'Joy and Memory'. A certain wistfulness is accounted for by a quotation from Thomas Hood: "And now 'tis little joy / To know I'm further off from heaven / Than when I was a boy". Whatever purposes 'Littlejoy' may be used for, one of them should certainly be instruction. The pieces are easy, though not very easy, and will give much pleasure as well as new experience to young players. For one thing, they do what so much music for children quite inexcusably neglects: they introduce certain things the learner may come across in modern music sooner or later and had better be accustomed to early. The definitely bi-tonal passages in No. 2 are a case in point; and Mr. Milford makes them sound so natural and acceptable that the learner will immediately like them even if the teacher does not. But there is a good chance that both will learn something. E. B.

Moeran, E. J., *Concerto* for Violin and Orchestra. (Novello, London.) Piano Score with Solo Part (edited by Arthur Catterall), 10s. 6d.

There has been a perfect cascade of new violin concertos by British composers, but they have all added something of value to the repertory without making each other superfluous, as they might have done had they been concertos first and music only in the second place. It does not matter in the least whether a fiddler plays Baillet or Vieuxtemps, Ernst or Lipinski, but it makes all the difference in the musical world if he chooses Walton or Britten, Dyson or Moeran. As to the latter pair, which happens to come under review here, it shows very striking differences and goes a long way towards exemplifying the considerable range covered by modern English music. Mr. Moeran's work has nothing like the polish of form and idiom found in Sir George Dyson's; on the other hand it is much more select in style, if one uses the word not in a sense conveying an idea of refinement, but in one suggesting individuality. One is aware of influences in Mr. Moeran, though less so here than one used to be; but they are in the nature of an inheritance rather than of appropriations. What came to him from other composers is in his blood and belonged to the same family from the beginning, though that family might contain members as different as Delius, Vaughan Williams and Ireland. It made him a character and taught him a language, and though you may or may not like the former and may or may not understand the latter, you know you are confronted and addressed by a personality. Moeran's *Concerto*, much less perfectly organized than Dyson's, is consistent with itself. The form is loose, but interesting and in the end convincing: a first movement more or less in sonata form, with cadenza material integrated into the structure instead of sticking out of it (which does much to make up for licences elsewhere); a large-scale rondo with independently enterprising episodes; and a slow movement at the end—a dangerous attempt, but one which succeeds here, partly because the composer is absolutely sincere in a mood that is both contemplative and passionate and partly because he happened to write for the violin, whose chief business, after all, is to sing. E. B.

Moeran, E. J., *Rhapsody in F sharp*, for Piano and Orchestra. (Chester, London.) Solo Part, with Orchestra arr. for Second Piano (in score), 7s. 6d.

The title of 'Rhapsody' here is not, as it has so often been in the past, an excuse for looseness and shapelessness. This one-movement concerto is in fact a remarkably trim, closely-knit composition. For all its numerous excursions into more or less remote keys, it keeps designedly within the orbit of F# minor and major, and the material is worked out without waste or excessive episodic matter. The keyboard writing is difficult, but does not demand any expense of skill in a waste of notes: it repays the player's efforts by letting him—or rather her, since the work is dedicated to Harriet Cohen—present music that is brilliant, but whose brilliancy is without hardness and does not ask the sacrifice of beauty. E. B.

Rathaus, Karol, *Three Polish Dances: Oberek, Kujawiak, Mazurka* for Piano. (Boosey & Hawkes, London.) 5s.

"Oberek", according to a note on the score, was the name given at one time to the coda of the mazurka, while the Kujawiak was a slower dance in a sentimental style. Both derive from the rhythm of the mazurka which itself derived from the sarabande. There is certainly very little evidence of the sarabande in these romantic examples. Each of the dances with its characteristic grace-notes, its strummed or droning bases, and its melancholy turn of phrase has a nostalgic charm reminiscent of both Chopin and Szymanowski. The Kujawiak is dedicated to the memory of Paderewski. The Mazurka is the most developed of the three dances and has a fiery character which, to our ears, seems to be more akin to the polonaise.

E. L.

Rawsthorne, Alan, *Concerto* for Piano and Orchestra. (Oxford University Press.) Solo Part, with Orchestra arranged for Second Piano (in score), 12s. 6d.

This is the kind of work which, if it had appeared a quarter of a century ago, would have been suspected of pretending to be witty though it was merely cheeky. We have made some progress in the matter of wit, being no longer quite the simple *bourgeois épâtes* of those days, when any composer could get away with this sort of thing merely because it was new and nobody would trust himself to pooh-pooh it for fear of being called an old fogey. Mr. Rawsthorne's *Concerto* may be safely accepted as genuinely witty, though its manner is impertinent. He has proved himself a serious musician before, and he still does, even when his matter happens to be amusing. He is perfectly entitled to being bent on fooling, because he is not intent on fooling his hearer. He gives titles to his three movements: 'Capriccio', 'Chaconne' and 'Tarantella'. The middle one sounds serious enough in all conscience, but even here, in a not very slow movement, the composer is whimsical. The obligatory ground-bass is present, but it dodges the listener's ear in various ways, beginning with a trick of sliding up the chromatic scale, a step higher at each appearance.

E. B.

Rubbra, Edmund, *Amoretti*. 5 Sonnets (Edmund Spenser), 2nd Series, for Voice and String Quartet or Piano, Op. 43. (Joseph Williams, London.) Vocal and Piano Score, 4s.

Madrigals for Mixed Voices, 2nd Set (Thomas Campion): No. 1. *Leave prolonging thy distress*. No. 2. *So sweet is thy discourse*. Op. 52. (Winthrop Rogers; Boosey & Hawkes, London.) 5d. each.

These seven songs are all typical examples of a style of vocal writing practised in England to-day by composers as different from each other as John Ireland, E. J. Moeran and Benjamin Britten, and having its origin in the first attempts by Holst and Vaughan Williams to revive the Elizabethan madrigal technique. There has never been an element of self-consciousness in this return to the madrigal, and since the movement has flourished, now, for over a quarter of a century it is evident that the tradition is still alive in composers to-day, as indeed Mr. Rubbra's examples clearly show. The settings for solo voice and string quartet of five sonnets by Spenser have each a form and character appropriate to the poems and reveal, on closer examination, certain devices which, as in the sixteenth-century madrigals, seem to have been designed to mirror in music the poet's inspiration. In the setting of Sonnet LXXVIII, for example, the resignation of the lines

Ceasse then, myne eyes, to seeke her selfe to see;

And let my thoughts behold her selfe in mee,

is symbolized in the accompaniment by a two-part imitation. A pedal effect is used to express desolation, while *fugato* passages are made to portray the craft and the guile of which Spenser accuses his love in Sonnet XXXVII. Similar procedures are evident in the *a capella* settings of poems by Thomas Campion. 'Leave prolonging thy distress' is fittingly illustrated by successive entries in canon, and falling fifths mark each of the entries in 'So sweet is thy discourse', as if the composer wished to colour the joyous mood of the poem with a suggestion of regret. All these procedures form a subtle technique of musical symbolism which the Elizabethans would have been the first to endorse. Unfortunately, as it sometimes happens to-day, these same procedures, divorced from their literary associations, are applied to large-scale instrumental forms where, developed out of all proportion to their musical value, they are liable to create an impression of mere scholasticism or pedantry.

E. L.

Smetana, Bedřich, *Evening Songs* (*Večerní Písni*). Czech words by Vítězslav Hálek.

English version by Jan Sliwinski. (The New Europe Publishing Co., London.) 2s. 6d.

We have certainly missed something by not having had an English translation of the five songs which Smetana wrote at the end of his life on poems from Hálek's 'Večerní Písni'. The English translation has now been undertaken by Dr. Jan Sliwinski, a Captain in the Polish Forces who has dedicated his work to Jan Masaryk, the Czech Foreign Minister. In view of this touching gesture, it would be embarrassing to draw attention to any matter of prosody or syntax which might not readily occur to a foreigner translating, as he graciously puts it, "into the language of our common hosts". We are

indebted to Dr. Sliwinski for having made available this little-known cycle of Smetana's songs.

There is, in each of the five songs, a simple fervour sometimes recalling the more characteristic of Dvořák's songs or the type of rhapsodic melody in Smetana's first Quartet. The first two, in simple *Lied* form, are on poems of divine praise and suggest a miniature counterpart to Dvořák's 'Biblical Songs'. The third is a lament in the form of a narrative and, by contrast, the fourth is built on a lively dance rhythm. The last, the longest of the group and the most sustained in expression, is a love song, gratefully written for soprano voice and of arresting romantic vigour.

E. L.

Stanton, W. K., *By the Rivers of Babylon*, for Six-part Chorus without Accompaniment. (*The Oxford Choral Songs*, edited by W. Gillies Whittaker, No. 847.) (Oxford University Press.) 1s. 4d.

This fine setting of the 137th Psalm is not church music, particularly, nor exclusively music for a concert: it is just choral music which interprets its text very admirably in terms evidently dictated by purely artistic considerations. Given reasonably broad views on the performers' part, it will therefore do excellently anywhere, and certainly not least so in church. There are some bold harmonic clashes which an organist had better not try out on his instrument first, where they will probably sound muddy to his ears; in their proper medium he will find that they make a splendid, virile effect, and that this will be enhanced by a good texture of parts that are always separately singable while they contribute unceasingly to a fine total effect. Excellent counterpoint, in other words, though the music does not show much close polyphonic writing on the face of it.

E. B.

Thiman, Eric H., *Preludes and Voluntaries* for Organ, Book II. (Curwen, London.) 2s. 6d.

This is a collection of educational pieces written for students who are approaching the organ with a knowledge of only piano technique. The pedal parts have therefore been kept very simple, and after the first piece no one need fear that he might play the left hand with the left foot. Dr. Thiman knows that exercises, to be good, must be musical. Sometimes, in fact, one can very easily forget their educational value, notably in the 'Romance' and the 'Pavanesque'.

E. L.

Weisberg, Julia, *The Wild Geese*. Soviet Opera for Children. English words by John Alford. (Novello, London.) Vocal Score, 4s.

Intended for both production and performance by young children, this "opera-game" has, as one would naturally expect, more affinity with the Diller-Quail tutorial music, well-known in America, than with the music for children by Prokofiev and Stravinsky. The simplest of Russian melodies and folksongs are sung by the Owl and the Hedgehog, the children in the orchestra pit have their chance with the *Leitmotif*, and the actors impersonating Stove and Appletree will doubtless try to emulate Wall and Moonshine in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'.

E. L.

Zulawski, Wawrzyniec, *Partita* for Piano. (Chester, London.) 3s.

Mr. Zulawski does not believe in letting much light into his harmony. Chords packed four in a bar, with seldom a note free from accidentals, are a little discouraging to the sight-reader, until one realizes that an extra flat or sharp is not going to cause an æsthetic upheaval. Still, some good ideas are discernible. The work opens with a broad Sinfonia, well laid out in three sections, followed by a Sarabande, a Gavotte, a Musette and finally a Gigue. The character of each of these old dances is apparent, but it would have been much more apparent had the composer felt able to prune away some of the harmonic undergrowth. The Gavotte, in particular, has a quaint angularity, resembling the Gavotte in Prokofiev's 'Symphonie classique'.

E. L.

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